

LIFE STORY

MAGAZINE

MAY
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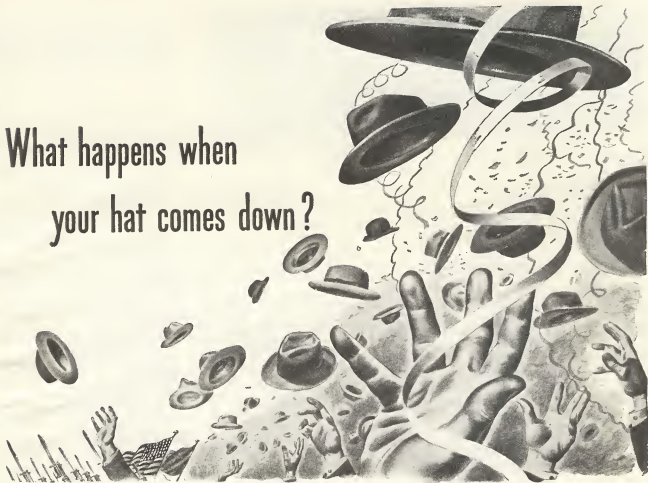
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Yes, wear this **CRUISER SLACK SUIT** at my RISK. If you, too, are not completely satisfied in every way, return in 10 days and your full purchase price will be refunded.—BONNIE GAYE



What happens when your hat comes down?



SOMEDAY, a group of grim-faced men will walk stiffly into a room, sit down at a table, sign a piece of paper—and the War will be over.

That'll be quite a day. It doesn't take much imagination to picture the way the hats will be tossed into the air all over America on *that* day.

But what about the day after?

What happens when the tumult and the shouting have died, and all of us turn back to the job of actually making this country the wonderful place we've dreamed it would be?

What happens to you "after the War?"

No man knows just what's going to happen then. But we know one thing that must *not* happen:

We must *not* have a postwar America fumbling to restore an out-of-gear economy, staggering under a burden of idle factories and idle men, wracked with internal dissension and stricken with poverty and want.

We must *not* have breadlines and vacant farms and jobless, tired men in Army overcoats tramping city streets.

That is why we must buy War Bonds—now.

For every time you buy a Bond, you not only help finance the War. You help to build up a vast reserve of postwar buying power. Buying power that can mean millions of postwar jobs making billions of dollars' worth of postwar goods and a healthy, prosperous, strong America in which there'll be a richer, happier living for every one of us.

To protect your Country, your family, and your job *after the War*—buy War Bonds now!

Let's all **KEEP BACKING THE ATTACK!**

*The Treasury Department acknowledges with appreciation
the publication of this message by*

Life Story

LIFE STORY

REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.

MAGAZINE

Volume 10

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LETTERS TO

A Letter From the Editor

I have wanted to write personal letters to all of you who have sent me your opinions of the new LIFE STORY. Your flattering comments, especially those referring to special stories, have helped us to make LIFE STORY a better magazine, and a favorite! Your criticisms have been the most intelligent, your letters the most stimulating I have ever read.

Some of your letters have criticized our use of "fiction" stories. "What," said a recent complaint, "does this author know about the people in this story?" The author was in my office, so I handed him the letter. "Tell her I saw that very story happen in my own home town—no, better not, because it might hurt the wife who got herself into such a fix." That is the best answer I can give to many of your questions.

We have made it our job at LIFE STORY to get in touch personally and by letter with people who have a story of their own to tell and who want to write it for us. Then we send reporters to get the stories of the people who are too busy to do their own stories, or from newcomers whose English is not as good as their own native speech. Finally, we seek out writers whose travels, investigations, and years of observation have given them a fund of stories from life. You will probably be surprised to know that Kathleen Norris did a recent series on women drinkers—by going herself to scores of bars, from the best deluxe cocktail lounges to the down-at-heel cheap "joints." Adela Rogers St. Johns interrupted her writing to go and stay in army camp towns to get true stories of the girls who pack a suitcase and go to make homes for their husbands.

If any of our writers live in penthouses, they're successful because they live there only part of the time and spend the rest of their time living in factory towns, farm communities, residential suburbs and big cities on all points of the compass.

Thanks to all your letters, we are always excited to find the stories that are real adventures in living and give them to you in LIFE STORY. If we select more stories of one kind and fewer of another, that's because you have written to criticize or to praise.

Names of real persons are not used in the stories in LIFE STORY Magazine unless specifically indicated.

If the names of actual persons appear under other circumstances it is a matter of coincidence. LIFE STORY Magazine is published monthly by Country Press, Inc., 1169 W. Broadway, Louisville 1, Ky. W. H. Fawcett, Jr., president; Roger Fawcett, vice president; Allen E. Norman, secretary; Gordon Fawcett, treasurer; Elmer Ogden, advertising director; Roscoe E. Fawcett, circulation director; Al Allard, art director. Entered as second-class matter May 29, 1940, at the post office at Louisville, Ky., under the act of March 3, 1879, with additional entry at Greenwich, Conn. Printed in U. S. A. Title Registered in the U. S. Patent Office. Address manuscripts to Editorial Offices, LIFE STORY, New York 18, N. Y. All manuscripts must be accompanied by return postage and submitted at author's risk. Payment is made promptly on acceptance. All remittances and correspondence concerning subscriptions, as well as notification of change of address, should be addressed to the General Office, 22 West Putnam Ave., Greenwich, Conn. Copyright 1944 by Country Press, Inc. Price 25 cents a copy, \$2.50 a year. Canadian subscriptions on accepted; Foreign subscriptions \$5.50. Foreign subscriptions and sales should be handled by International Money Order in United States funds payable at Greenwich, Conn.

THE EDITOR

Tell us what you want in the way of life stories and we will go out and get them.

The Editor.

LIFE STORY, Janitor, Laundryman

I love your magazine—its quality is as high as any I have seen, and it seems more homey and human than others on the market.

As a stranger in a strange land, where my contact is mostly with the janitor and the laundryman, your magazine is a real friend to me.

Mrs. W. B. Pasterfield,
Ocean City, N. J.

Time and a 3c Stamp

I just read a recent issue of LIFE STORY. What has happened to the real stories of real people—the ones you used to print?

I'm disappointed that you have changed to adventure stories by well-known authors. Can't you get real stories back again? Surely there are real stories now. Not by famous people, just everyday people who—

Oh, what's the use? You would need thousands of letters before you would change back to a good LIFE STORY Magazine, and maybe others don't have time to write and waste a 3c stamp.

Here's hoping you change before there's a No Sale sign on your door. You'll lose one reader, I know, unless you go back to real living stories.

Mrs. Ollie Timmer,
Williston, N. D.

Other People's Troubles

It would be difficult for me to tell you how much LIFE STORY has meant to me and my friends.

For the past two years I have been a constant reader, enjoying every page from cover to cover.

It has occurred to me that by reading about other people's lives, hardships, sorrows and joys we can forget our own problems for awhile and perhaps profit by the experience.

I wonder if you know what a really splendid job you are doing for the people of this nation by taking their minds off their troubles at such a trying time?

Mrs. Pauline McLaughlin,
Winchendon, Mass.

[Please turn to page 7]

Housework's the Only Job I Know — what could I do in a war job?

"The More Women at War — The Sooner We'll Win!"

Harness that housework energy and skill to any home-front service! Every day, more and more women *must* help keep production moving! If your town needs workers, each day you delay means more men must die—Victory must be postponed. Below, see how many domestic duties can be applied to a war job!



Ever cook—serve meals? . . . a restaurant or hotel needs you! A real war job, if ever there was one—*vital* to civilian life! Full time, part time, there's a place for you, with pay. Read the classified ads in your home paper—for openings available *now*. Or get free advice from your Employment Service Office.



Ever wash and iron? . . . laundries need you! If you can run a washing machine, or do anything in the laundering line, here's a war job that will relieve your country of a serious problem! See the want ads. Also, your U. S. Employment Service Office will gladly give you free information.



Ever keep accounts? . . . manage household bills, budgets? The WACS, WAVES, SPARS and MARINES need women for many types of work. Jobs computing pay rolls, keeping records, etc. Serve in uniform—release a man to fight! Inquire at your nearest Army or Navy recruiting station.



Ever go marketing? . . . try selling! It's like shopping—in reverse. Drug store clerks are urgently needed to sell cosmetics and other items, to serve at fountains or as cashiers. A job in any store is *essential*! Inquire in your neighborhood—read those want ads! Start working today!



(U. S. Reg.
U. S. Pat. Off.)

Published in the interest
of the war effort
by Kleenex* Tissues



Paper, too, has a war-time job . . . that's why there's not enough Kleenex Tissues to go around. But regardless of what others do, we are determined to maintain Kleenex quality in every particular, consistent with government regulations.

NEWSLETTER FROM WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON OFFICE
OF LIFE STORY

To Life Story Readers

Here's the news:

Girls Needed!

ACCORDING TO THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION, more than 6,000 clerks, typists and stenographers are desperately needed in Washington. The pay is \$1,440 to \$1,620 a year plus overtime. If you are at least 18 and interested in filling up that girl-power shortage, see your local Civil Service Secretary at any first or second class post office or write to the U. S. Civil Service Commission, Washington, D. C.

Don't let the tales of the jam-packed housing situation scare you off. While there is a shortage of houses and large apartments in Washington, there are plenty of furnished rooms and one-room apartments.

* * *

Door-Key Kids

WASHINGTON is trying to do something about the door-key kids. What these lonely and neglected youngsters need, says Katharine Lenroot, Children's Bureau Chief, are temporary or foster homes. So the Children's Bureau is trying to get people all over the country who like children and have room for them "to share the happiness and security of their homes with a child not their own."

Persons interested in becoming foster parents, or parents wanting to place their children should contact their local child care councils, welfare boards or county welfare workers. Foster parents are paid board and are provided with clothing and medical care for their foster children.

* * *

Tips on Victory Gardens

VICTOR R. BOSWELL, Department of Agriculture expert, recommends to victory gardeners that after setting out tomato plants they might water each plant with a cup of a "starter solution" made by stirring half a pound of fertilizer in four gallons of water.

In drier areas he suggests letting the plants grow naturally on the ground instead of staking them. A mulch of straw, sawdust or grass spread around the plants will prevent rot. Mr. Boswell reminds gardeners that soaking their plots with water once a week is much more effective than frequent sprinklings.

G. C.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Continued from page 5

Is Frank Sinatra Public Property?

Maybe you can do something about this pet peeve of mine.

Every time I read a story about a crooner, I find he is described as being a lanky-framed, tousled-haired, boyish-looking person. Now, it seems to me that while everybody makes jokes about Frank Sinatra's looks, they seem to be capitalizing on his fame.

Can't you do something to stop this? Pulleeze!

Ruby McMillin,
Indianapolis, Ind.

Poems For Lonely Hours

One of my favorite features in *LIFE STORY* is the poetry department. I read these lovely verses the first thing of all.

My husband has been overseas with the Marines for eight months, and I just want to thank you for a wonderful magazine that helps me get through the lonely hours.

Mrs. Wayne Calvin,
Long Beach, Calif.

Fun For Teen Age Girls

I have just finished reading the latest issue of *LIFE STORY*. It was great. I have never been much of a hand for reading, but I was in the hospital nine days this month, and someone happened to bring me your magazine. I enjoyed it immensely.

I think that teen age girls will get a lot of fun out of reading *LIFE STORY*. The article on Betty Grable was especially interesting.

Keep up the good work and your magazine will be a favorite of all people.

Elaine Burrus,
Danbury, Nebraska.

Every month, *LIFE STORY* publishes some of the most interesting letters received from readers. Address your letter to The Editor, *LIFE STORY* Magazine, 1501 Broadway, New York City, 18.

3 ways to tell a Fib

(FROM ANY OTHER TAMPON)

Only FIBS* of all tampons
give you all three . . .

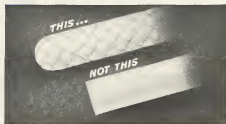
1. Fibs are "quilted"



. . . for more comfort, greater safety in internal protection—that's why, with Fibs, there's no danger of cotton particles clinging to delicate membranes. And quilting controls expansion . . . so Fibs don't fluff up to an uncomfortable size which might cause pressure, irritation, difficult removal.



2. Fibs have rounded ends



. . . smooth, gently-tapered ends . . . for easy insertion! Unlike any leading tampon you've ever tried, Your own eyes tell you that Fibs *must* be easier to use! You'll like the just-right size of Fibs; they're not too large, not too tiny.



3. Fibs—the Kotex* Tampon



. . . a name you know, a tampon you can trust. No other brand is made of Cellucotton®; the soft, super absorbent used in Kotex and demanded by many of America's foremost hospitals! In Fibs, as in Kotex, there's no compromise with quality—you get protection as safe as science can make it.



*T. M. Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

The Kotex Tampon for Internal Protection

Dear Frank Sinatra—

THE birdbath cast upward from the garden a little pool of sparkling sunlight. Phyllis lay watching it waver limpidly on the ceiling above her head.

Her eyes had not opened with their usual dreamy languor, but had flown wide, at once, as if the spring of an alarm clock had released them. For this was the day, the great and thrilling day, when she was to see Frank Sinatra, "in person." She, Phyllis Sinatra, was to see him, actually see him!

He had been a myth, a disembodied voice; now he was to become real. To be sure, she knew what he looked like. There he was, on her dresser. They had laughed at her for framing a photograph cut out of a magazine. And, of course, she hadn't told them that she had written to Frank, begging him for his autographed picture, saying that she would cherish it as one of her dearest possessions all her life. She had told him how she had organized a Frank Sinatra club—the Frank Sinatra Club of Greendale—and that she owned a record of every song he sang and never missed his radio hour.

"What!" Uncle Bill would say. "Is

BY LEONARD HESS

ILLUSTRATED BY E. E. OPPENHEIM

Dear Frank Sinatra,
You'll never know
until you read this story
the part you played in the
lives of these three people you
have never met.
Happiness you saved—



that bleater on the air again? Shades of Bach and Beethoven!"

Bach and Beethoven were all right. She loved some of their music; it was beautiful. But Frank Sinatra's songs did things to you deep down inside, things that hurt and made you sad and yet lifted you up. Like All or Nothing at All, or I Heard You Cried Last Night. She sighed. Uncle Bill and, for that matter, Aunt Ruth, just didn't understand that even if you were only going on 15, you might have plenty of reason to be sad.

She rested her eyes on the face of Frank Sinatra. It was a spiritual face, she thought; thin, rather pale, with a

they were so important to her, had such a big place in her heart. Her memory did not go back beyond Aunt Ruth. She was only two when the ship had gone down with Father and Mother so that they were, to her, faces in silver frames on the living room mantel. Sometimes she tried to imagine what they must have been like, but it was possible to imagine only Mother, because people said she had been quite like Aunt Ruth, her sister.

The pool of light went out in a blur and splash.

Of course, if it happened, if what she was afraid of happened, she would still be living with Aunt Ruth. But it would

marriage might come to an end, and she could still smile! Was it supposed to show bravery? It was simply stupid! You ought to fight to keep what you loved!

Phyllis's tears grew bitter, savage. She knew how things were! Oh, she knew! This cheerless, tiny house—her lovely home and her home, her little life of safety and contentment—had been growing dimmer, dimmer, gray and more gray until she scarcely recognized it any longer. It would surely happen! For months, she had felt it coming.

Then, exactly a week ago today—yes, last Saturday—the full force of it had burst on her.

She had not meant to overhear Aunt Ruth and her friend, Laura Carver, talking in the garden. She had been lying with a book under the hedge, in a strip of shade, when they came along and sat down in chairs on the other side. She had expected them to talk about things it wouldn't matter if she heard. She probably would not even hear, for she wanted to read. The General's Lady was a thrilling book.

Then it was too late to move. Had she listened after all? Or had their words penetrated into her mind without her knowing, making her cold all over? Too late! It would have been embarrassing to have got up and shown herself—after what they had already said. So she pressed closer against the hedge, desperately wishing for them to go away. The book was face downward on the grass, and she could not keep from plucking the grass blades—plucking and plucking them, and tearing them to shreds, the way she was being torn inside.

"But you don't mean to tell me you're not doing anything about it?" Laura Carver asked in her throaty voice. "You're not just going to let him walk out?"

"I'm not going to stand in his way." "Oh, don't be so noble!" Laura exclaimed.

"I'm not trying to be noble. But when he tells me I'm getting between him and his work—"

"I thought you were his inspiration. He's often said so."

"Well, he seems to have changed his mind. He's been horribly touchy for months. He can't take criticism—although he keeps asking for it." "Isn't that a novel good?" Laura wanted to know.

"A William Whitestone novel is always good," Aunt Ruth replied. "And this will be wonderfully good—if he does something about the two chil-

drums, that's all. He was only in his twenties, they said. But how much more must have lived through! How marvelously he understood sorrow and longing! Her eyes went again to the pool of sunlight, and it began to shimmer with rainbow hues as Phyllis felt tears gathering on her long lashes.

There was another song Frank sang, Be Careful, It's My Heart. It made her think of Aunt Ruth and Uncle Bill—

all be terribly different with Uncle Bill gone. They had all been so happy together. She had come to love him almost as dearly as she loved Aunt Ruth. The incomprehensible thing was that he loved Aunt Ruth, too, and yet he was talking about going away—"for the sake of his work," it seemed. He was a writer.

And Aunt Ruth! She could still smile! Just think of it—her beautiful

dren he's got in it. He just doesn't get children right! And when I tell him so, he goes up in the air."

Laura made a clucking sound. "The question is," she said, "is there someone else?"

Phyllis heard the drone of insects on the summer air and thought she heard the loud hammering of her heart while she tore at the grass blades, waiting for Aunt Ruth's answer.

"He says there's no one else." The sickening thud of Phyllis's heart stopped. There was no one else, anyway! How could there be anyone else, ever, for Uncle Bill—when Aunt Ruth was so good, so lovely?

"He says?" Laura Carver took it up. "But?" Her tone was cynical.

"There is no one else!" Aunt Ruth declared, her voice none too steady, however. Then, "I know what you mean, Laura. I know what some people are saying. But it isn't so."

Bluntly, Laura mentioned Maude Venner's name, and Phyllis hated Maude Venner. She had never liked her too well, and now she hated her. In that caustic way of hers, Laura was saying that Uncle Bill had been seeing too much of Maude Venner.

"She thinks the new novel's just perfect, doesn't she?" Laura refused to be interrupted by whatever Aunt Ruth began to say. "She thinks those children are done just too brilliantly, doesn't she? She doesn't know a child from an egg! And Bill, the idiot, swallows it all and comes up for more!"

"He's not the least bit in love with Maude," Aunt Ruth protested.

"But don't you see—if you let him go—he may drift to her? He'll go to someone—they almost all do. He'll leave you, his wife and severest critic, and scoot to her, his 'sincerest flatterer!'"

"Well, if that's what he wants—" Aunt Ruth sighed.

"I don't say he wants it. Bill's first class. But it can very easily happen. Drift! Half of life is just drifting. If Bill thirsts for flattery, why don't you flatter him?"

"Laura!" Aunt Ruth cried. "I want every book he writes to be better than the one before. Flattery is ruinous!"

"Letting him go will be more ruinous—for him," Laura snapped.

"He'll come back."

"Don't count on it. I wouldn't."

Aunt Ruth repeated, "He'll come back." It sounded unsure.

AT LAST they went into the house. Phyllis lay shivering, despite the hot August sun. She wanted to hate Uncle Bill for what he was doing, but she could not get herself to hate him. She could not get herself to hate Aunt Ruth for doing nothing to stop him. When she looked at the house, it seemed to sway, all its windows to burst into white flames.

Since then, Aunt Ruth had gone about, smiling, strained. Didn't she know what she was letting happen? "Happen to me, too!" Phyllis whispered to herself. You tried to think that it wouldn't happen after all, but you knew it was going to. Then she'd be like Leida Phelps whose father and mother were separated. Although this wasn't her father and mother, still, in a way, she'd be like Leida. Mrs. Phelps tried always to act so cheerful, but you saw through it. It would be like that with Aunt Ruth.

Phyllis threw off the bedclothes and sprang up. "Let them do it!" she cried aloud. "I don't care!" She'd learn to bear it. "But I won't live with her if she lets him go—I'll live somewhere by myself!"

She looked down on the garden, and there they were, walking slowly back and forth. Aunt Ruth's face was bright in the sun, but Uncle Bill's shaggy dark head was bent so that Phyllis could not see his expression. He had been very moody all week, hardly noticing anyone. She could not catch a word of what they were saying to each other, quiet as the air was. Oh, they were talking about that! Uncle Bill generally worked very late into the night, and rarely got up before 11. But today, he had this on his mind! They were talking it over, making the decision! Phyllis clung to the blue-and-rose chintz curtain, and a faint odor of the chintz, mingling with the odors of the garden, weighed on her senses. But now her eyes were hard and dry. Presently, Aunt Ruth's voice came clearly to her.

"If you still think it best for you—"

Uncle Bill's might have been a stranger's voice. "I've got to consider my work! I can't help it!"

"Surely!" said Aunt Ruth. And

Phyllis, her mouth bitter and contemptuous, felt ready to shake her.

Uncle Bill made a gesture, and they returned slowly to the house.

Phyllis began to dress. She was late. What did she care about them? She had her own life to live! She'd have to make the 10:06 to meet Leida at 11. If you weren't in line by 11, a fine chance you'd stand of getting in! The club had a newspaper clipping which told how when Frank Sinatra had appeared in person in Chicago there had been 6,000 kids in line, and they had had to call out the police—it was nearly a riot!

But with all her need for haste, her fingers fumbled. Her blue eyes filled with fresh tears. This was the day of days! But how could she want to go to the theater? She wanted to throw herself on the bed. She was afraid to go downstairs and see them. They had probably made up their minds, and they would tell her. She didn't want to hear it.

From his place of honor on the dresser, Frank Sinatra looked at her with soulful eyes. Comb in hand, she gazed back at him. She whispered, "You won't see me, Frankie, but I'll be there!"

She stole down the stairs to slip off before they could see her. But Aunt Ruth came out of the living room. "You haven't eaten breakfast," she said, when Phyllis told her she was making the 10:06.

"I haven't time. I'm meeting Leida at eleven in front of the Paramount." And she wondered whether Leida's name must not cause Aunt Ruth to think of another broken home.

Uncle Bill appeared, dragging on a big pipe. "Going to hear the bleater?"

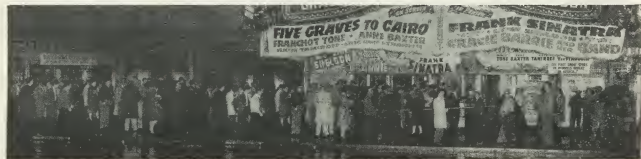
Aunt Ruth smiled at that. But then, very gravely, she said, "I wanted to talk to you about something, dear."

Phyllis had all she could do not to scream, "You needn't tell me! I know!" Instead she said, her mouth quivering, "Can't it wait till I get back?" She couldn't look at either of them.

A glance passed between Aunt Ruth and Uncle Bill.

"It can wait," Aunt Ruth said.

Uncle Bill went into the living room, no elasticity in his step, his large frame sunken, his eyes those of someone who has not been sleeping well.





"Tell us where you've been!" Uncle Bill demanded. But Phyllis only sobbed, "You wouldn't understand"

Phyllis was frantic, with no Leida in sight. Ten after 11 and no Leida! She saw the minutes tick away on her wrist watch. Even now she could hardly breathe; she had raced so from Grand Central. Quarter past. Oh, how stupid of Leida! They'd never get seats—might not even get in.

At twenty minutes past the hour she darted, with a toss of golden head, to the end of the line. Leida or no Leida! Instantly, it was no longer the end; pushing, squealing, shouting, cooing atoms attached themselves. On all the faces was fixed the same intense purposefulness, the same impatient ecstasy.

THE boy behind Phyllis was, she thought, about 16. He was thin, and he did not stand very straight, as she did in her green sweater and gray skirt. He had curly brown hair and very good features, especially the dark eyes. He wore a green bow tie with orange polka dots. Phyllis guessed it was because Frank Sinatra wore bow ties—it was a good way to show your admiration.

When Phyllis and the boy fell into talk, naturally it was about Sinatra. He, Michael Warren, was thinking of getting a Sinatra club started in his high school. He himself played the uke.

"I'm not so hot, but I'm learning," he said, with a nice grin.

"Frankie began by being agent for a high school band and then singing with them," Phyllis said.

"I know. But I won't ever be like him—I mean, a singer. I've got a voice like a frog."

"Oh, no—you haven't!" She thought his voice awfully nice.

"I mean, when I sing," he said.

Phyllis kept looking for Leida. It would be awful if she were waiting around the corner.

Michael asked if she were in high school, and she told him yes, a soph in Greendale High. By this time her conscience was beginning to prick her sharply. She ought to do something about Leida.

Do you [Please turn to page 102]

"When will you be home?" asked Aunt Ruth.

"I'm having dinner at Leida's. I guess I'll take the 8:10."

Hurrying down the path between the lavender irises, Phyllis felt Aunt Ruth's warm glance following her. This path would never again be the same. Never again would she run up it eagerly—home. Doubly home it had been since Uncle Bill had come to live here. Not once looking back, she knew that the figure,

watching her, still stood in the doorway.

An orange and blue banner proclaimed it:

FRANK SINATRA IN PERSON.

Everybody in the world had come to see him! Phyllis gasped at the line already bent far around the corner. What shuffling, stamping, shouting! A policeman bawled,

"Get in the line, you! Get in the line!"

Take Your Beauty Problems to a Doctor



BY DON COOLEY

R Worried about your complexion? Remember, beauty is only skin deep, but your skin is as deep as your body. Cosmetics can enhance your charm only if your skin itself is in good health.

EVERY time Louise's boy friend called on her his eyes started to run, he breathed wheezy and complained of dizziness.

At first Louise was a tiny bit flattered. She thought, not without reason, that her charms were the kind that make strong men weak, and that was cheering because Jerry was the one man in the world for her. But when Jerry's distress became so great that he started cutting his visits short, and the intervals between dates became longer and longer, Louise became frantic.

It hadn't been like that during the first months she had known Jerry. Only in the last month had he begun acting so queerly. Was he trying to break things off? She couldn't believe that he felt differently about her. No, it must be something about her that had done this thing to him—something so awful, so mysterious that he couldn't bring himself to tell her.

The mystery gnawed at her heart and put lines under her eyes until finally she went to the family doctor for a "tonic" to make life seem worth while again. Dr. Allen was the sort of doctor you confide in, and eventually the whole story came tumbling out.

"Hmm—sounds like allergy to me," he grunted. "The young man showed no signs of prostration in your presence until a month ago, you say. How did you alter your living habits around that time? A new kitten in the house? Change your lipstick? Get a goose-down cushion for the sofa?"

Louise flushed and said: "It's the same sofa as always. We haven't got any pets. I did run out of face powder and got a new brand."

"Hand it over." Dr. Allen took her compact and slid it out of sight in his desk drawer. "Buy some face powder of your old brand. Go home, wash your face, apply the powder and telephone Jerry. I have an idea you won't need any other tonic."

Nor did she. That evening Jerry was his old self, tender and sweet, with no wheezing or rheumy eyes. It turned out that Louise's face powder had been the culprit. It contained orris root, to

which Jerry was allergic—abnormally sensitive.

If Louise had been allergic instead of Jerry, her face powder, instead of beautifying her, would have made matters worse—caused skin eruptions, ugly rash and redness, or other symptoms. Not that anything was the matter with the powder. Very few cosmetics today contain harmful ingredients. Powders help to cool, dry and refresh. Fatty creams are soothing to dry skins. Lipstick may prevent chapping.

But you are a unique person. You may react in unpredictable ways, mysterious to anyone but a doctor.

Many beauty problems vanish like a pricked bubble when a doctor gets after them. Unightly skin troubles, which the victim resignedly feels must be endured for life, often disappear miraculously when the allergens that cause them are tracked down. It is hard to believe that common, harmless substances can affect one's beauty quotient. The most ordinary foods, the most common clothing fabrics, the simplest everyday chemicals, may rouse sensitive skins to eruptive anger. If you have a distressing skin problem, it may save hours of anguish if you ask your doctor what it's all about.

Perhaps he will give you a "patch test." He applies small amounts of various suspected substances to your skin. If an angry red wheel appears after a few hours, he has convicted the culprit. Then it's merely a matter of avoiding the offending substance to have a skin that someone loves to touch. Of course it is not always so simple. Beauty is only skin deep, but the skin is as deep as the body. It is a complex, amazingly active organ that needs care from inside out. It is a mirror reflecting the activities of remote glands, of the digestive system, of the body functions. One type of dry skin eruption, not helped by applying ointments on the outside, arises from lack of Vitamin A.

Another deep-seated skin trouble is acne. Its toll of heartbreak is beyond measure, for it usually attacks young people at the very age when they most wish to be attractive to the opposite

sex. The blackheads and unsightly pimples are bad enough, but the scratching and rough squeezing they get is even worse, for infection may follow and gouging may leave permanent pits and scars.

I REMEMBER the seventeen-year-old daughter of a neighbor—let us call her Emily—who was almost a mental case. She felt that people stared at her accusingly. When acquaintances spoke to her she stammered and fled. She had no friends among her schoolmates, could not seem to share their fun. To her parents she was morose and curt, or listless and sullen. Most of her time was spent in the seclusion of her room. Her worried parents finally took her to a psychiatrist. He sensed Emily's trouble in her face. A pretty face except for the blotches of acne which marred it.

"Everybody stares at me so queerly!" Emily blurted under the psychiatrist's gentle questions. "It's these horrible pimples!—I haven't done anything to deserve them."

"Of course not," said the psychiatrist. "Acne isn't caused by 'bad blood,' Emily. It's a badge of youth that a lot of us old folks would trade money for. I want you to stand on the busiest street corner in town for an hour. Watch the young people passing by, when come back and tell me what you see."

What Emily saw was, of course, dozens of youthful faces as afflicted as her own. This did as much for her mental attitude as a dermatologist did for her physical appearance.

"You are growing into womanhood," the skin specialist told her. "Your body is undergoing tremendous glandular adjustments. Acne is a common by-product of this activity. In acne, the skin is always oily and greasy. So you must use lots of soap and water, but no creams or ointments. A blackhead extractor which you can buy at the drugstore will enable you to remove blackheads without damaging the skin. Use it just after you have washed your face with soap and hot water." [Please turn to page 60]

What chance has a brave man in love when his best girl's
kid sister doubts his courage?

PROBLEM CHILD

BERT walked to the edge of the dusty road, stopped under a tree, and looked all around, feeling guilty.

If somebody saw him, a local cop or an M.P., for example, they'd get suspicious.

However, nobody was in sight. So Bert jumped the fence, springing over it easily, because he was muscular as well as big.

He doubled down quickly so that no one coming along the road would see him searching in the tall brush.

Bert had searched here before. That was yesterday. Yesterday afternoon on his way home from his trick as radio operator in the C.A.A. weather station, Alaska Division. Yesterday, the same as today, he'd felt all tremulous and guilty, although nobody had bothered him. He guessed he wasn't so much afraid of getting caught, anyway. Just didn't want to be embarrassed. It was the idea of a big husky like Bert being caught picking flowers.

The flowers he was gathering were pretty, although he didn't know their names. Flowers weren't his line, like dots and dashes and Type 15 teletypes. But these flowers were sure beautiful and the brush-grown, abandoned field was gay with them.

When he had gathered a nice bunch, Bert jumped the fence again back on to the road.

Now if I don't lose my nerve like I did yesterday, he thought.

The road curved easily down to the river, to where afternoon sun lay across the water. The low sunbeams were putting shadows in the hollows of the river waves, making them look like larger waves. The waves on the ocean had looked like that, only larger of course, from the deck of the steamer coming up from Seattle. That had been the first time Bert had seen the sea. Sure a change from Missouri!

Bert had come from northeast Missouri, a rolling prairie country. He'd started off by becoming a radio amateur, while he was a telephone company lineman. Now he was a first-class brass pounder. When you couldn't copy the radio messages as fast as a good sender could dish it out, they called it being put under the table. None of the hot-shots put Bert under the table any more.

A house came in sight. Bert immediately buttoned his shirt collar and tied his necktie.

The house, a large, white rambling one, had a neat sign in front. Rooms. Bert'd liked the place a lot the first time he saw it. The river was close and he enjoyed fishing. Besides, he'd never been around water much before. It was still new to him. He liked Alaska. He hadn't expected Alaska to be quite so homey.

Mrs. Morgan and Lora Andrews were sitting on the porch.

"Get a Jap today, Bert?" Mrs. Morgan asked, by way of greeting. Mrs. Morgan was



"Lora, he's trying to take my boat," Susan screamed. Bert couldn't understand it. This kid sure was some pill

the landlady, about 50, a large, pleasant soul who always asked if Bert had got a Jap that day. Bert had bought an old 30-30 deer rifle to keep in the station where he was aircraft communicator, and one day he'd taken a few shots at a snooping Jap plane, so Mrs. Morgan was kidding him.

Bert grinned. "Hello, Mrs. Morgan. No Jap today," he said. "I mailed your letter for you. Nice day, wasn't it? Hello, Miss Andrews. How are you?" He tried to be casual with this last.

Lora smiled in a nice way that raised hob with Bert.

Lora Andrews was another roomer. Lora had lost her father and mother about a year ago, Bert had learned from Mrs. Morgan. She was employed in the new Alaska highway administration office, and she had a 10-year-old sister named Susan. Susan lived here with Lora. Susan was some pill, in Bert's estimation.

Lora was slight, about a 110, with blue eyes. But that didn't do her justice. Lora was a kind of a golden girl, when she wore a yellow dress, like now.

The two ladies were having lemonade. "Have some lemonade, Bert," invited Mrs. Morgan.

"No'm, thank you," Bert mumbled, although he'd have liked some lemonade.

"Plenty in the pitcher,"

"Thanks, I guess not," Bert said. He was feeling twenty feet tall and as awkward as a barge. He was losing his nerve again.

"See you picked some flowers," said Mrs. Morgan.

"Yes'm." He looked at the bouquet and struggled with his courage.

"They're pretty," Lora said kindly.

Bert lost the battle.

"Yes'm," he choked. "Thank you. Well, excuse me. I better clean up for dinner."

He walked self-consciously into the house. When he got to the stairs, he went up them in big desperate jumps. Inside his room, he sat on the bed, disgusted.

"Of all the fraidy-cats," Bert groaned.

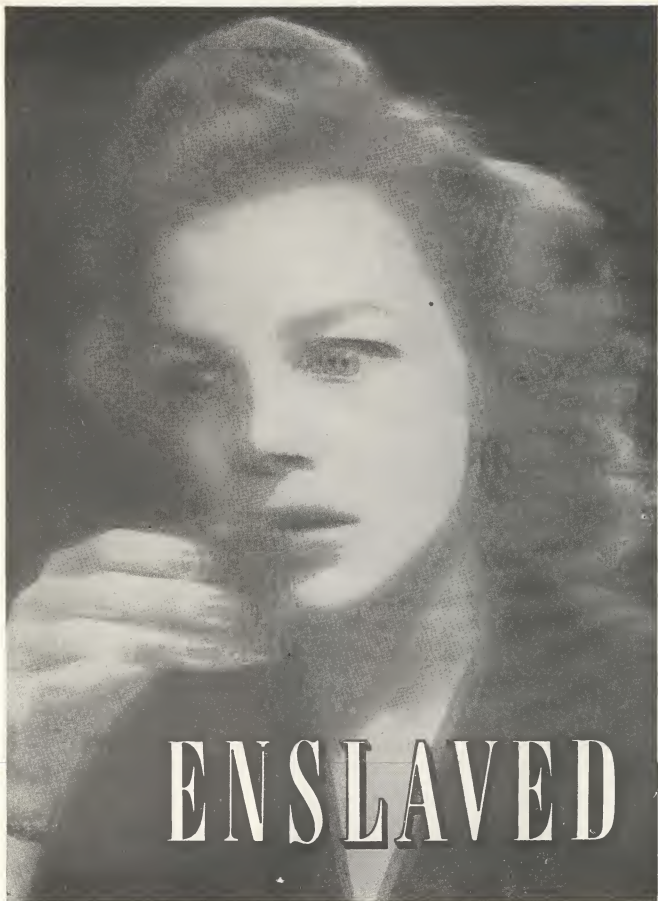
Bert knew an engineering crew would be here in a few days, laying out the hard-surfacing for the new highway. He'd seen some of those crews. They always had plenty of big, smooth, handsome engineers who weren't bashful.

Pretty and unattached gals were a scarce article in this part of Alaska. There just weren't any others as pretty as Lora. Bert thought it a miracle that some fellow hadn't captured

[Please turn to page 98]

BY LESTER DENT

ILLUSTRATED BY ALBERT JOUBERT



ENSLAVED

"AND so," a voice was saying, "I changed my mind about that coat. It wasn't quite so stylish as the other, but the quality was better, and it matched my hat. Don't you think I was sensible?"

"Yes," I heard my own voice saying. "It's a lovely coat."

I felt as though I were coming out from under ether; as though I were being born out of nothing. I heard the voice again, rippling on with its endless small talk, and I heard my own answering; but I didn't know who belonged to the other voice, and I had to struggle to remember who I was.

I blinked. The fog was lifting. There, facing me in an arm chair sat a girl I had never seen before. She was smiling, talking as calmly as if she had known me a long time. She took me so completely for granted that once she even called me Barbara.

My glance darted quickly, furtively about the room. It was shabby, poorly lighted; and the high-up windows showed it was a basement flat. How did I get there? How long had I been there? Who was this girl?

Oh, I realized how it must have happened all right. Waking up, fully dressed, lying on a strange bed in a strange room, with a hangover headache and a dark brown taste in my mouth was an old story with me. Sometimes it would be the room of a friend who had taken care of me till I should sleep it off; sometimes it would be my own room; twice it had been a hospital ward. It had never been a police station—yet. And it might be a psychiatric ward—some day. But this was different—a way-station, maybe, toward that grim destination I could see looming up ahead, the insane asylum. There were bars over those high-up windows. The sight of them sent a shudder through me. I saw the girl look at me closely, curiously.

But my mind was racing like a runaway train. When I had come to before, it had always made sense. A way it had been the same old familiar experience of waking up after sleeping it off—there was continuity to it.

But this!—Here I was, sitting up in a chair and right in the middle of a

conversation I didn't know anything about. I felt like a sleep-walker suddenly awakened on the edge of a precipice. I had been talking with this girl a long time. I must have met her somewhere.

The glare of a street light shining in told me it was evening—and my wrist watch said 6 o'clock. The last thing I remembered was sitting at lunch about 1 o'clock with a girl I knew, in a restaurant near Times Square. That part came back clearly enough. I had had two Martinis with her, and in the quarter hour before she arrived at the restaurant for our appointment, I had had four. And I still wanted more. Six Martinis for lunch, preceded by one pull after another at my flask, while I had slowly dressed for the appointment. Six, plus all those swigs, and still I had wanted more!

And—if only I could have one now! I was getting the shakes and no mistake. I had to pin my hands down under me to keep that girl from seeing how they trembled. If I could only get a drink, I'd be able to collect my scattered wits, put up a front, and these horrible chills would stop chasing each other down my spine.

As I sat there, waiting for a break in that endless trickle of amiable, leisurely small talk, I wondered again what I had been doing during those five hours. It could have been literally anything, and I wouldn't know the difference. I could have murdered, I could have been picked up by some strange man, I could have stolen—*Could have*—yes! But this girl seemed nice enough, and I had apparently escaped the complications my imagination was conjuring up. I drew a quick breath of relief. There was nothing to fear here. This was evidently just a social visit, with a new friend who apparently didn't have the least notion that I had not been stone sober through every minute of our short acquaintance. I could remember calling her "Dorothy" just as I was coming out of that haze.

"Dorothy" was disappointed when I abruptly said I must be going. Why, I had only been there a little while! I had said I'd stay for dinner! But I lied glibly, inventing reasons why I

had to get home. A few minutes later I was in the street, walking down past a row of brownstone houses, old timers of the '80s that had once seen better days. I never saw or heard of "Dorothy" again. I still haven't the remotest notion of who she was or how I met her.

Gradually, I pieced together what had happened, though. I suppose I must have somehow got acquainted with her in a chance meeting, after leaving the friend with whom I'd had the luncheon engagement. We probably got into a conversation, as two strangers will. The liquor made me expansive and talkative. So far as she could see, I was perfectly sober—an unusually companionable and genial chance acquaintance whom she liked well enough to invite to her apartment for dinner. Maybe I invited myself. I don't know.

After I left that girl's house, I walked to the nearest subway station—five blocks away. It bore a name I had never heard of. The trip to Grand Central took forty-five minutes, and I had to change trains twice. I had been in the remote reaches of Brooklyn.

When I got back to the apartment where I lived with my sister, my shaking hands couldn't get hold of a bottle fast enough. I got very drunk. It was my usual state when night came. But this time I was able to remember everything. There was no amnesia. I remember how I explained elaborately to my sister that this couldn't go on, that I was going to do something to put a stop to it right away, how I searched for William Seabrook's name in the telephone book so I could call him and ask him to help me get into that place he told about in Asylum, where he had himself committed for alcoholism.

I could not remember having ever done that before, but my sister told me it was my nightly procedure. I looked at the window and thought of jumping, as the easier way out. But instead of jumping, I hid a bottle of gin under the mattress where I could get it if I awakened during the night; then, fearing my sister would find it, I filled the peroxide bottle in the medicine cabinet [Please turn to page 61]

Women at bars! Women with bottles! Women drinking to forget war and headlines!

Here is the confession of a woman who drank too much and learned too late that the habit was stronger than she was. Read the amazing story of her fight back to decency

EVERY MAN FOR HERSELF

BY ZAZZA



LET'S face it: Life is difficult without money. I was on a train, somewhere in the Balkans, headed for America. I was wearing a brown suede suit and a mink coat, and had lots of luggage around, and I looked very fit for America. But my ticket was good only as far as Istanbul, and my \$50 not much further.

The day before, in Budapest, I'd been rich and had so much background! And the day before that I even envied girls who could do what they wanted to, with no well-to-do parents behind them. Well-to-do parents are quite a handicap to a girl. They are not so tremendously rich that their children can do as they wish, but they care just as much about name and reputation as the bourgeois.

I was very curious about how I was going to get along. All the good advice I got at the station wouldn't help me. My beautiful mother had said: "Promise me that you won't forget to wear your petticoat, darling, and always be generous with tips."

And Father had said: "Forget the war and the bad manners it creates. Travel like a lady." And he gave me \$1,000.

And Mother gave me a bottle of Talc for an old friend of hers in Istanbul.

I had such a marvelous farewell. All my boy friends were there. And even some of the candy makers were there, really left. They showered me with flowers and candies and magazines and perfumes.

Of course, Aunt Nora was there, too. No family is complete without an aunt around. She is a patented sourpuss, vintage 1890, and therefore does not agree with me. She brought me a big book, *Gone With the Wind*, and said I could learn from Scarlett O'Hara.

I love to get presents, even from aunts, and I never say: "You shouldn't have come to all this trouble," as some girls do. I don't think that leads to anything and, according to my philosophy, everything in life should lead to something. But I was determined to give her an answer. I think she deserved it, but Ducky interfered. Ducky is my elder sister, and she always keeps me from being fresh to Aunt Nora. I think she has Aunt Nora's jewelry in mind.

I am glad that I don't need those things. Besides, I have all of my mother-in-law's jewelry, so I only said: "Thank you, Auntie." And to please Ducky, I added: "Yes, it is wonderful what some girls are able to do."

Then Mother, who always smells a rat, cut in and tried to provide me in two minutes with all the good advice she could easily have given me since I'd returned from Ankara. "Don't forget you are only twenty-three. And don't try to act more sophisticated than you are. Men like naive women."

Mother usually is too clever to give advice. She knows that her daughters prefer to make their mistakes themselves.

"When will I see you again, Angel Monkey?" Father sighed. He truly sighed. People rarely do nowadays, but he is such an old-fashioned darling.

"America is not Siberia, Vilmos," Mother, with her sense for geography, explained.

"But remember all those gangsters in Chicago!"

"That wouldn't worry me," said Mother. "I'd be much more worried about those innocent gangsters, if they meet Zazza."

"You never should have started working," Father sighed again. "You know that I didn't object to your too-early marriage and to your divorce, but work is not for a girl."

Poor Papa! With a wife like Mother and three daughters who inherited her style, what he does have to go through! Imagine buying four mink coats in one season! If he knew that I lost all my money, he would die.

When the station master blew his whistle fifteen minutes after he should, there were still many things unsaid.

The train behaved like Aunt Nora, and made a big ado about getting into motion. I practiced some blitz kisses on all the lifted faces and went off to my compartment. I didn't know whether I was unhappy or not. At times it is very difficult for a girl to make up her mind. There was such a mixture of feelings in me. That is why my ex-husband called mine a complicated nature. He said men always have a standpoint. Of course, I doubted that very much.

I looked out of the window and waited to see lots of things and wave a good-by, but dirty smoke blurred all my darlings. My sister's red hair was the last thing I could see clearly. Red hair is such a nuisance. Who knows better than I? And then I cried a little anyway, and I wondered how much I would like the world I was going to see.

THE porter said something nice to me about going away from home and arranged everything about my luggage. I gave him a big tip because I am Mother's daughter, and had no idea what fate had in store for me. To tell the truth, money makes it very easy to travel like a lady. Then I started reading *Gone With the Wind*. It is a very heavy book and difficult to handle. Imagine a lady having enough patience to fill a thousand and more pages! In my profession one page is enough, and sometimes it brings quite some money, indeed. For the cartoon of Goering's over-sized wife I got 50 pounds from my English publisher.

When I had just finished the first sentence, I thought I saw a vision: Wasn't that Zoltan, my last and best of seven boy friends from Budapest? Zoltan the magnificent, whom I had already cursed silently because he hadn't shown up at the station. I wouldn't have admitted my disappointment openly. I think it is bad taste to give other girls reason for pitying me.

He kissed me and held a piece of salami under my nose.

"I know, darling, that love goes through the stomach," he said, "and I want to keep your love! I hope nobody in America is ever so ingenious as to bring you salami!" And he put the salami into a silver box on which were engraved the words: *My Love Forever*.

Zoltan always has the most ravishing ideas. Lots of women in Budapest wanted to murder me because I took him away from them for some time.



See those pearls. They brought Zazza out of Europe. Read her story—and watch those pearls

It's Mad! It's Zany! It's ZAZZA!
A Terrific Adventure in Living!

He settled down comfortably and said he would accompany me to Kalosa house, but he had serious things to talk over with me.

"I am not in the mood for serious things," I said. If I had known what was going to happen to me, I would have asked him what to do without money. But perhaps he wouldn't have known about that anyway, because he was so much money with his fashion magazine that he doesn't even know how it feels to pay cash. He only signs his name. That's all a rich man has to do.

All he talked about was himself and men and good behavior, just as he does in his magazine.

"I promised," I promised. "I read your magazine every week."

"Quiet," he said, "I am talking now."

I let him talk because I like a man who is energetic.

"Don't fall in love with every tall, dark and indifferent man, and don't break your neck if one doesn't fall for you immediately. Remember, there are men on this earth who are in love with other women, and others who are allergic to red hair."

"Don't insult me, magnificent," I said.

"I don't," he said, and kissed me. He wasn't handsome, but he could kiss and was witty. A girl always loves with her ears; only a man loves with his eyes.

"You know that I still love you," he said. "I will marry you any time, even if you come back broke and with a regiment of broken hearts."

"That's better than a life insurance," I said. "I want the main column in your magazine."

"Never," he said. "You would tell women the truth too frankly and lie only in the wrong places."

That's how Zoltan was; he always found the most complicated compliments.

We had a wonderful time till Kalosa, which wasn't very far, and before he left, he said: "One thing is sure, you'll never find a better man than I." From which one can see that he writes all his advertisements himself. When he climbed from the train, he shouted back: "Never lose weight, cherie, every ounce would be a pity! I don't like those streamlined American movie girls."

"And don't you dare flirt with my sisters, or with Mother, either, at least till the mourning year for me is over!"

WHEN he was out of sight, I inspected the silver box. It was not only made of sterling silver, but also sheltered a golden watch, which showed the hours, days, years. What a marvelous boy friend! It is not easy for a girl to keep a man as a friend after a flirtation. Usually they get resentful. But I can keep them. I have my theories about that, and I am glad they work well.

I closed my eyes and tried to doze; it is rather exhausting to leave your

family, your country and your background in one day.

When I woke up, I had a visa in a suit. A gray-haired man, wearing a long suit, who looked as if he had a long-term hangover. He stared at me and asked: "Hévent, I only you before? Weren't you Miss Hungary of 1938, and the wife of a Turkish diplomat?"

"That's all me," I replied.

"I voted for you. You deserved it. It is a good omen to meet you on my saddest day."

"Why are you sad?" I asked.

"Because I am not only old and poor, but also without a country."

"That, of course, is too much," I said. There is no rest for the Jewish people in the world as long as Adolf is alive," he said. "I am going to Yugoslavia and then to Palestine, if I can work my way through."

In order to console him a little, I told

of becoming an international situation.

"Look," the gray gentleman said, already all smiles and dental work. "I have never met such an interesting girl. Perhaps there is something to emigration."

"Of course, there is!" I said. "You have to look at it from the right angle. It would be best to live all your life in Debrecen. Remember, one has only one single life to live."

When we reached the frontier, my gray friend became very nervous.

"It is no use to be nervous," I said. "Customs officers are human beings."

He said: "My dear child," and nothing more, but I did not have to be a mind-reader to know how he felt. When the customs officers appeared, I smiled, but they were ill-humored and none of them grinned. Then came an interview I definitely didn't like.

ZAZZA on her First Venture

him that I also was a victim of politics—though I didn't understand politics at all and only liked to talk about them. I told him how I had written a story from a woman's angle for the *Esti Kurier* and illustrated them with my own sketches. I lived in Berlin then, and as the faces of German leaders are predestined to be cartooned, I couldn't refrain from making nice little drawings. My paper couldn't print them, but an English newspaper could. I just wrote: *This little black mustache is wondering what it has to do on the face of this*

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He said: "My dear child," and nothing more, but I did not have to be a mind-reader to know how he felt. When the customs officers appeared, I smiled, but they were ill-humored and none of them grinned. Then came an interview I definitely didn't like.

ticket as a gift from the immigration department."

He didn't listen, but read a lot of printed nonsense about regulations and so on, as if anyone in Hungary ever cared about regulations. Everybody has a cousin in a high position, and regulations are just for the newspaper readers.

Finally he said: "You have to deposit nine hundred and fifty dollars at the customs house, or you cannot proceed with your trip."

To tell the truth, that was a shock. But in my heart I thought such a thing couldn't happen to me. Therefore, I tried to talk my optimism into him. Usually I am rather good at talking. I have had results. People always yield after awhile, because they want to talk, too.

"Listen, gentlemen—" I honored them with this word—these one thou-

sand dollars are in fact not money, but a ticket. It is allowed to take a ticket out of Hungary, isn't it?"

And then I went on and on explaining that the traveling agency I knew about boats, and everybody was too excited because of politics. So Father asked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, because he goes deer hunting with the Minister, and was told I could take \$1,000 with me—the Hungarian Government is not so poor that it needs a young woman's money.

But my long speech made not the slightest impression on those customs officers, though it was accompanied by all my smiles, and confusing enough.

"How much?" he shouted. "Only one thousand dollars!"

"Only one thousand dollars!" he repeated and put all the scorn he could muster into his official voice. "A trifling of one thousand dollars! You must be crazy!"

"I am not crazy," I said. "I have a health certificate. But I have to go to America, and you do not get the

maliciously about my jewels. Now I love jewels because they make my girl friends envy me, and bring me lots of attention. But the attention I got from the customs officers was not the kind I desired. I made a face because it was too late to hide my diamond ring. All I could do was explain that it was an old-fashioned one and setting, inherited from my grandmother, and only worth a few pengos. But the officers definitely didn't like my talk.

The whole regulation procedure was repeated, and if it hadn't been for the diamond ring and a still more beautiful brooch, I would have been bored to death. I finally realized that my family would receive the objects in due time. What kind of jewels I would wear in America, nobody cared!

Those regulations were very stupid to a girl, that is sure. And I did not see how it would help the war effort if my elder sister went around wearing my diamonds.

I was duly mad when I left the customs office.

"Wait a minute!" the chief called after me, "what about the pearl necklace you're wearing?"

"It's not the fashion to wear genuine pearls," I said. "You may bite on them if you don't believe me." I went a little closer, but he did not close, and offered my necklace, still on my neck, to be tested by his teeth. He seemed to be horrified by the idea and rather afraid that I might bite him back. So he desisted from examining the pearls and let me go. Me and my genuine necklace, inherited from Grandmama, who even considered it had turned to wear a pair of gloves twice. Grand-

ma, supplied the family with so much background that it was sometimes hard for Mother to live up to it. And that is how I became poor. Somehow, I knew I'd get along, though.

THE next morning in Belgrade a new regulation upset me. No one was allowed to leave the train during our stay at the station. We were supposed to proceed at 8 in the evening. I didn't see why it would help the war effort if I stayed in a full train for ten unbearable hours.

Very determined, I put on a haughty face and walked down the platform area of the station, though soldiers with fixed bayonets guarded all the exits. To tell the truth, it was not difficult at all. Therefore I was a little worried about the customs monsters who'd be if the Germans marched in.

There were no taxis at the station, but old flakers with coachmen in high fur caps and beards like Russian priests. I talked to them all the six languages I know, but none worked. Finally, I swore in Turkish, which I consider the best tongue for swearing. One of the men snapped his whip to indicate he understood. So he and his old mare drove me to the Hotel Majestic. The streets were covered with snow. We didn't stay in the car because it was cursed at every bump. At one bump, when my head had the opportunity to meet the ceiling of the carriage, I swore too—even better than he. That made us good friends, and without serious accident he deposited me at the hotel.

The doorman paid my fare, as I had no Yugoslavian money, and said he would put it on the bill. He didn't tip much. Doormen are always stingy to drivers. They must have their reasons. But we didn't talk about it. I was too hungry.

The dining room smelled wonderful. But the head waiter said there was not a table left, and told me to come back in two hours. If there is anything I cannot stand it to be sent away from a place! I certainly did not return to the second street. Very early in the morning I stood in the doorway and looked around.

Not long, though. An officer solved the problem, a good-looking officer. The Serbs do have a good-looking Army! The officer felt the urgent duty to offer me his table and his company. I accepted his offer. After all, a table with company was the best solution for me in a foreign town. He ordered a typical Yugoslavian meal for me, but I can't write down all those different names. I didn't even catch them. The only thing I got was his name, Pavel, because we needed it for our conversation.

Pavel said he had ready to go into action, and then he talked a lot about himself. I think it is bad taste if a man talks too much about himself. I like to talk about myself, too. I like to know [Please turn to page 87]

A VERY WORLDLY



WOMAN?

*A Story from a
Mother's Memory*

MARGARET PARKER passed her husband the cream pitcher containing the skim milk for his coffee and thought fleetingly that life was almost unbearably perfect. It was tempting fate to have everything so right, to have Matthew, reading the weekly paper across from her, so boyishly pleased over the account of his Fourth of July address to the G.A.R.; to have Emma out in the kitchen contentedly whamming pans around in a nice permanent kind of way, and at two and a half a week, too, when she could easily get three anywhere else, and to have 17-year-old Judy, who was pressing her dress for the picnic today, going with young Don Murdock. . . . Murdock's General Hardware, Murdock's Feed and Grain, Murdock's Lumber and Paint.

Don was creaking the porch swing now, waiting to take Judy to The Lake. Don, who had gone to Princeton instead of Jepsan College, whose mother kept a maid and not a hired girl, whose father owned a lovely Stanley Steamer instead of a spavined horse and a mud-splashed buggy.

It was perfectly all right that Damaris, her oldest, had gone and got herself engaged to Brick Ryerson, who hadn't a thing to offer but college debts and a slow smile and honors in chemistry. But certainly a minister's family could use one well-to-do son-in-law, just one. Why couldn't a pretty girl fall in love with a solvent young man as well as with one of the other kind?

Matthew benignly passed the paper to her, and she turned at once to "Locals," which in Jeffersonville meant "Society," and her pleasant world turned upside down. It was such an innocent-sounding paragraph that upset it, too. Merely that Miss Polly Sloane of Philadelphia was making an extended visit at The Lake with the Hobart Bentleys before returning to fashionable Huntington Park Seminary in Washington, D. C., in the fall.

It couldn't be anyone else. Polly Sloane—Paulina Sloane. The last person on earth Margaret wanted to meet or to have Judy meet.

For years the "Sloane Boxes" had been arriving at the Parkers', and for years the Parker girls had been squabbling over their contents and—after a few alterations by Margaret—wearing them proudly. It had



"Judy!" her mother gasped in dismay. But Judy was already off for the picnic, wearing the dress that had once belonged to Polly Sloane

BY MARION CASTLE

all started back in Matthew's first charge, when the Sloanes had been brief summer parishioners and Mrs. Sloane had suggested gently to Margaret that with her own Paulina growing so fast, it would be a favor if the Parker girls could help wear out her clothes. The Parker girls were obligingly small and threadbare.

Throughout the years Margaret had winced over the arrival of every Sloane Box, thankful at least that the Sloanes lived a long way off. A benefactress 1,000 miles away could be borne, but, four miles! It was unthinkable. All her bright line-upon-line and precept-upon-precept teachings to her children crumbled away as she admitted to herself that she had never really believed in them. She had secretly resented Matthew's bland, unworshipful acceptance of the boxes. His only regret seemed to be that they contained too much organdy and too little woolen underwear.

She supposed her background was all wrong. Feded, very faded, southern aristocracy in a mildewed little town where people would rather starve than work, and often did, was not the best preparation for being a minister's wife. And Margaret Vaughn had had all of a featherheaded southern belle's love of compliments and guitar playing in the moonlight, with a corresponding aversion to facing reality. Then she had met Matthew Parker, a gaunt, poverty-stricken Yankee theological student, who told her at their first meeting that he did not believe in a minister's marrying, but that if he must, the last girl in the world to pick would be one of these ornamental, useless southern girls who had never found out that the lily and the onion belong to the same family.

Then he had smiled at her, and all the compliments in the moonlight were as nothing compared to her need of earning the good opinion of this sober, intense, dedicated young cleric. After Matthew, any other man would have been a savorless substitute. She'd known it then. She knew it now. But knowing it had not made her a proper minister's wife; it had only made her a loving one.

For over twenty years she had been racing along after Matthew spiritually, always a few steps behind, always a little out of breath, but never flagging. It wasn't in the big things like faith and prayer that she fell behind. It was in little worldly matters that she was such a hypocrite. Pretending she didn't mind red hands and stubby fingernails from housework (though, unexpectedly, she did not mind the housework). Making a joke of being caught papering the dining room by her old boarding school roommate. Expatriating upon the character-building aspects of a little hick college like Jespen because it offered ministers' children half-tuition and jobs waiting on table. All these things she had hated inwardly.

Yet aloud she dutifully proclaimed

To Margaret, it was like dreaming an odd nightmare over when Polly Sloane said, "How odd! Once I had a dress exactly like yours"

ILLUSTRATED BY
IAN HANFIELD



the dignity of labor, the importance of material things, the folly of false pride, and the belief that God's children were all equal in His sight.

The children had valiantly pretended to believe her. Cheerfully they wore Paulina Sloane's cast-offs. They either suffered pinched feet or they padded out the toes with tissue paper to wear Paulina's dancing slippers. "Princess Paulina," they called her, conjuring up a picture of this girl, who was a little younger than Damaris and a little older than Judy, until it was a composite of Alice Roosevelt and Maxine Elliot and the Blessed Damosel.

MARGARET heard a concluding thud as Judy banged the iron back on the cookstove and unsnapped the wooden handle with a click. She glanced out, and the dress on the ironing board fairly jumped at her. The latest from the Princess Paulina! And in ten minutes Judy would be starting for The Lake in it, where the first person she would probably meet would be Polly Sloane herself. Judy mustn't wear it! It was all very well to talk about the sin of false pride, but what solace had religion to offer a 17-year-old who might be made to look ridiculous?

It could do something awful and lasting to Judy. In front of Don too, who'd always been so well-off he didn't realize that poverty is a series of petty humiliations rather than something stark and picturesque.

She started from her chair. "Judy, it's muggy out. If it should rain and spoil your dress—"

Judy looked appalled. She slipped the dress off the board and cradled it in her arms. "I'd die," she said positively. "It's one of the prettiest the Princess ever sent. I'll wear something else, Mame."

"A nice middy blouse?" Margaret called hopefully upstairs after the flying, coil-legged girl.

She went out to the porch to speak to Don while Judy dressed. He stood up politely. Princeton certainly gave boys nice manners. She was glad, with a little blush, that she was the kind of woman who never sat down to breakfast in a wrapper, or without her high shoes laced and her hair in its coronet braid. She hoped her Johnny, who was on the road this summer selling aluminum ware and a Handy Compendium of Remedies for Man or Beast, always remembered to stand up when a farmer's wife entered the room.

There seemed astonishingly little to say to Don Murdock, however. The Murdocks weren't church people, so you couldn't talk about the Aid, or the leak in the church roof, or the new song books which the Christian Endeavor was trying to raise money for. Nor about her recent subterfuges in dyeing curtains for Judy's room and turning Matthew's collars. And these were mostly what made up her life. He didn't seem interested even in politics—not in [Please turn to page 74]

I GET ALONG WITHOUT YOU

BY THYRA SAMTER WINSLOW

SHE'D been jilted! Turned down! Thrown over! Given the brush off!

There were a lot more synonyms, Jane knew. Forsaken. Rejected. Put aside. And they all meant about the same thing.

"I might as well face it," she told herself. "He's through with me." And then, in the next breath, though she really didn't believe it, a new thought always crept in: "I'll get him back!" Maybe she had to hold on to that to keep going at all.

Curiously enough, it was fairly easy in the office, where, somehow, you'd think it would be hardest. Jane had to act, then, to save face. She couldn't let others see how she felt!

She'd arrive, wearing her little black suit and a crisp white blouse and a silly little hat. And she'd sail into her office with bright morning nods for everyone. Almost a grin on her face. And jolly words for anyone who was near.

It was a good thing she'd worked up to having her own office. An office with a real door and not glass partitions, the way it had always been before. That helped a little. She could unbent the smile when she was alone.

As soon as anyone came in, there she was, seemingly as happy as ever. "Oh, hello, Mr. Bevans! Weren't the Rutledge people wonderful? They were so pleased with the whole account and it was really a great work."

Or "Yes, Miss Truesdale, I quite agree with you. Those drawings take up far too much space. I'll make a new layout. No, indeed, I don't mind! I love doing it!"

Always the happy, contented little working girl! She wouldn't let anyone get anything on her!

But there was always a curious little tentacle out. A sixth sense. Was that Cliff Halliday who'd come into the outer office? Who was he talking to? Where had he gone?

Cliff didn't work for her firm, but the company he worked for and her firm were always mapping out campaigns and Cliff was always in, had out of the office, full of bright ideas, a bit boastful, a trifle too hearty. Oh, she knew Cliff's faults! But when you're in love with someone. . . . And,

after all, she had her own faults. She must have a lot of them, too, or Cliff wouldn't have tired of her.

Cliff used to go with her, and now he went with someone else. It was as simple as that. But being simple didn't make it any less painful.

She had lunch with a couple of the girls from the office. And then she really was proud of herself! No actress had anything on her! She'd been casual and carefree and gay.

"We saw the picture at Radio City last night," she said. "It really was a swell picture, and we laughed at that one scene. . . ."

She didn't say she'd gone with Danny Clarke, who was little better than an office boy. Nor that she'd seen The Voice of the Turtle all alone from the balcony, afraid that someone would see her—and notice that she was alone. It took a lot of the pleasure away from seeing the show.

Yes, it was easy enough to get away with things during office hours, to be nonchalant and indifferent. She was a picture of the successful young business girl who didn't give a darn!

It was when she got home at night that things changed. If you could call a one room and kitchenette apartment home! Even that had seemed all right when Cliff was around. He sort of laughed at the way she fixed it up. Chintz covers on the furnished apartment chairs. Lots of ash trays and books, and records. It had seemed swell. Now, it was just awful! A horrible room with ugly furniture. Nothing like the pictures in the magazines showing how a business girl ought to live.

But in stories, girls weren't alone like this. If they did get turned down, there was always another man, like a pop-up in a picture book, ready to take his place. Or he came back, repentant! Well, maybe Cliff would come back!

But he wasn't back, yet! And the evenings were long and dull. Sometimes Jane ate dinner at one of the tea rooms designed especially for solitary women. Drib little places with foolish attempts at gaiety, and tea-roomy food in small portions. Women alone, or in groups of twos and threes. Thin women with mouths that turned down at the

corners. They ate slowly, and Jane knew they had nothing to do once they'd finished eating. They were older than Jane, but they made her shudder. Was this what she was coming to?

It was better eating alone. Buying things at the delicatessen. Three-layer sandwiches and fruit and milk. And listening to the radio. Though, at that, eating was just a step. A step to throwing herself face down on the sofa and thinking about Cliff.


IT DIDN'T seem possible that just a few weeks ago she had been seeing Cliff all the time. Three or four nights a week, anyhow. That seemed almost unbelievable, now.

They'd have dinner at some funny little place Cliff had heard about. Not that Cliff liked funny little places. He liked dining at Voisin or the St. Regis or the Waldorf, but it was the funny little places that he could afford. Jane enjoyed Hamburger Heaven better with him than she could have enjoyed dining at the Colony with anyone else. Though, at that, she'd never had a chance at the Colony.

After dinner, they'd go to a movie. Usually a movie Cliff had heard about—and these proved to be the very best ones. Sometimes they went to the theater on passes. Cliff knew a lot of people who were connected with the theater. Very occasionally they'd go to an opening night. That was what Cliff liked best. He'd stand in the lobby pretending he wasn't noticing people and point out celebrities—movie and stage people and cafe society—to Jane.

After the theater or the movies, their evening really began. Cliff took Jane to the smartest and most chic cafes, and though they usually sat at the bar to avoid the cover charge, he managed to see everyone of any account who came in. Again, he'd point out people to Jane and tell her little histories about each person. Movie stars were his special delight, but any celebrity was important. He was especially pleased when he saw Jay Rhoades. Jay sauntered into Monte Carlo while they were there. He was with an older man. [Please turn to page 10]

VERY WELL



"I'll get him back," she told herself—but even as she said the words, she wondered how she would ever be able to

Why PAT O'BRIEN is ONE HALF of

BY CHARLES SAMUELS

the WORLD'S HAPPIEST COUPLE

IT HAPPENS that I knew Pat O'Brien intimately many years ago, when he was a struggling young stage actor. This was before he'd ever met his wife, beautiful Eloise Taylor, former screen actress, or dreamed that he'd be a great motion picture star one day.

It is a privilege to watch a man and a woman you like and admire fall in love, to see their devotion grow until it is the emotional pivot around which their whole lives revolve. That was my privilege in the case of the Pat O'Briens.

I thought this the Sunday afternoon when I sat in the living room of Pat's beautiful home in Brentwood, Calif., and watched him playing on the floor with the youngest of his three children, Kevin.

The O'Briens' marriage might easily inspire a dating blueprint for happiness that would well serve thousands of men and women who are separated from those they love by the inescapable emergencies of the war.

The O'Briens are still just ordinary people. The years have brought Pat world-wide celebrity and considerable wealth. He's been able to give the one woman in his life everything she could want. But he's the same genial, fast-talking Irishman he was in the old days on Broadway, when he was living in a \$5-a-week furnished room. And Eloise is the same swell, unaffected girl she was when she worked in stock companies all over the country and dreamed of the day when the wheel of fortune would stop at the right number for Pat and her.

One of the most endearing things about their love story is that, though it has a theatrical background, it might have happened in the same way to you and that good-looking fellow you like who worked in the gas station around the corner until the big guns went off at Pearl Harbor.

I FIRST met Pat O'Brien in 1926, at the Lambs Club, on West 44th Street, New York. The Lambs, as you probably have heard, is the favorite gathering place for the great men, the have-beens and the great-to-be of the theater.

I was a reporter on a Brooklyn newspaper at the time and my city editor sent me to the Lambs to get a feature story about David Warfield, one of America's most celebrated actors, who had retired from the show business.

The Lambs is always a treasure chest for people writing about theatrical personalities. Every day, in the afternoon, you can encounter there most of the male stars of yesterday's, today's and tomorrow's Broadway hits.

That day, for example, the late John Barrymore, in from Hollywood for a visit, was holding forth at the bar with his usual superb wit to a group including George M. Cohan, Leon Errol and Walter Catlett. Trading reminiscences at a table in the adjoining room were Joe Frisco, Joe Laurie, Jr., Van and Schenck, Julius Tannen—all great vaudeville headliners. In the cardroom upstairs Bugs Baer and Lou Holtz were playing rummy.

I was leaving the club, after interviewing Mr. Warfield, when I ran into Harland Dixon, one of the best of all musical comedy dancers. He asked me if I'd have a drink while he ate.

We took a table next to two big Irishmen whom I'd never seen before. They looked neither prosperous nor very happy.

"Don't tell me those two are actors," I whispered to Dixon.

He nodded. I sat, looking at them. They had none of the flashy sheen the stage gives to most of its people. They seemed too rugged and simple to be show people. On the street, I would have taken them for men who worked outdoors—engineers, mining or oil men, perhaps.

Observing my interest, Harland introduced us. "This is Pat O'Brien," he said, indicating the black-haired, round-faced Irishman. The dancer turned to the other man, a red-headed fellow with a worried, furrowed brow. "And this," he added, "is Spencer Tracy. Both very good actors."

I had never heard of either before.



At Home: If you think Eloise ever regrets having given up her career, just look at the smile she's giving Pat and the three young O'Briens



At Work: Pat in his new picture, *Marine Raiders*, with Ruth Hussey



"And both at liberty—at the moment," commented Tracy wryly. On Broadway that means, of course, out of work.

The four of us chatted for awhile, mainly about the theater. Actors seldom talk about anything else. I kept wondering what Tracy and O'Brien expected to get out of Broadway. Neither had enjoyed much success in New York. When they worked, which wasn't very often, as they admitted quite frankly, it was usually with some small-paying out-of-town stock company.

When I got back to my office that day I told the city editor about the two very un-actor-like actors I'd met. I wanted to write a story about them but he told me to wait until one of them got into a big Broadway hit. Arguing that every newspaper in town would run stories about the same man when that happened proved futile.

Remember, I first met Pat and Spencer Tracy in 1926. At that time the best plays of such dramatists as Eugene O'Neill, Sidney Howard, Hecht and MacArthur were just being written. What I was clever enough to see was that O'Brien and Tracy were not isolated examples of ordinary looking, intelligent performers, but merely two of a whole crowd of stars-to-be who were destined to dominate the stage and screen of the immediate future—such actors as Jimmy Cagney, Clark Gable, Edward G. Robinson, Burgess Meredith and Walter Huston, to name just a few.

The new generation was going to demand and get hard, fast, realistic plays and pictures. Their favorites would be actors and actresses who looked like and behaved on the stage like people they had known all their lives.

The day of [Please turn to page 77]

A LIVING
LOVE STORY

Having had to wait for their happiness, the O'Briens appreciate it more

SPRING HEADLINES

BY CATHERINE ROBERTS
FASHION COUNSELOR



Up, up and UP goes this Helene Garnell creation of brilliant green straw trimmed with checked rockades



Kobachromes by Faurett-Mangione

Lily Dache designed this charming colorful snood which can be worn a dozen different ways. Fine or coarse mesh.



Beige belting pulled forward in a new dashing silhouette. Created by Dohbs, it comes in lovely pastels for summer



Hot weather dine-and-dance-dates will be sparkled with Florence Reichman's flowered half-hat and matching gloves



A cool sleek hair-do anchored with a flower spray above netted chignon replaces unruly curls or fly-away hairs



Cords woven across back of head convert the half-hat into a really comfortable cool design. Brae-Barn matches this smart design with a plastic handled belting bag. White and pastels



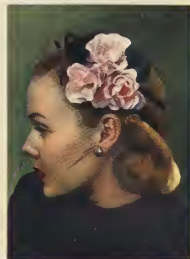
A halo of shocking pink and fuchsia petals curves down to catch and hold a low slung chignon. Crown, black felt



Brewster's two tone Robin Hood cap is another head-bugging design for tailored and sports wear. Felt with quill



Berets, chic and popular, are always with us. This Knox design has a semi-cloth that holds it on in a high wind



To be worn with sheer black frocks, a straw cloth half-hat decorated with pale pink roses and delicate veiling

BY PAUL ERNST

What goes on behind the luxury front of a New York night club? You'll find out in this story of a different kind of "backstage" life

THE only unusual thing on the desk was the bullet. This, a flattened .38 slug, was set in a small gold disc, like a nut baked into the top of a wafer, and represented the dividing line of Jim Ivor's life. Fourteen years ago Jim had picked it out of the side of a speedboat after it had creased his temple and made a flap of his left ear. The bullet, from the gun of an annoyed alky runner, had indicated to young Jim that working outside the law not only wasn't moral, it wasn't even sensible.

The other standard articles, from clock to ashtrays—for visitors, Jim didn't smoke—were as plain as could be found and of as good workmanship and material as existed in Manhattan. These things, not the bullet, indicated the status of Jim's life since 1933 when he had accumulated the shoestring that enabled him to open the first Club Thirty.

The rest of the office, about the size of a large closet, was also plain and unadorned. Outside was all the costly fanfare of miniature but mighty Club Thirty; but the office, the heart of America's best-known night spot, was plain, businesslike, and soundproofed for quiet.

So was Jim Ivor.

There was about him, as he sat at the desk at a quarter of 1 a.m., a quiet so intense, so perfectly ordered and relentlessly sustained, that it was almost menacing. His body, square, heavy-boned, hard with daily exercise, was still. His limbs were still. His face, his hands, his eyes were still—especially the latter. They looked at you without ever blinking, it seemed, blue under level dark brows; and at first you thought them cruel, and then you gradually realized that they were not. They were only calm, impersonal, and just with a cold justice that could be unerring.

The buzzer sounded. He threw a little knob and said into the grill on a box, "Ivor." His voice was deep, without much inflection.



Starr looked good and mad. Her eyes were angry gold. "Why didn't you tell me?" she demanded. "The Navy can't use..."

What Do You Call Love, Mr. Ivor?

It was Mick, the doorman, tone uncertain, as if he did not know whether he should have called. "Starr just came in, boss," he reported.

Ivor's lips parted, closed again. Then he clicked the knob down fast to cut the connection. It was not in keeping with the rest of him, this swift small move. His face was as unrevealing as always, his body was as still, but the move betrayed him. It was like another man's gasp.

Starr. Starr Lane, 16 when Jim had first known her in Chicago, big-eyed, a slim, limber kid, a pretty good dancer

even then. A very good one, with top billing, now.

Jim picked up the gold disc with its embedded slug and slid it absently between his fingers. He often did this when his mind was off on other things. Frequently he carried it with him in his pocket when he went to keep some important appointment. The bullet had come to mean a great deal to him. It was his luck. And surely he'd been lucky in life—except for the one thing, the girl who'd filled his hopes and dreams, years ago, and then had gone off leaving in these fragile tissues

nothing but empty holes. He sighed. Jim's lips tightened as he unwillingly remembered things he insisted to himself almost daily he would never remember again—principally the night when a girl of scarcely more than high school age came running to his room. The picture stood out clear and always would.

Her eyes were wide and terrified, but her round, small chin was gallant beneath her trembling lips. Her young face, white, set, held no weakness; on the contrary it seemed to have reached maturity in an hour. She smiled a bit at the silent, almost sullen-seeming youngster who was Jim Ivor then, smiled although her body shook uncontrollably every few minutes. She kept her sleeves down, almost managing to cover the lowest of the purple bruises on her arm.

"Well," she said between shakes, "this is it. I finally agree I'm doing no one any good by staying with him, Jim."

She saw, under the fury in Jim Ivor's eyes, the stark longing—she'd have had to be blind not to see it—and she shook her saucy head, a small move blended of pity and despair.

"Please, Jim, no."

She'd come for sanctuary, that was all. She'd come for help, because he, Jim Ivor, had told her he'd always be around if she needed help but had not told her how crazy he was about her. He hadn't told her because, before he could, another man had married her—the man who'd put the bruises on her arms.

She hadn't let him beat the fellow up, even after the divorce. "What good would that do?" she'd said evenly. The calm, the self-composure she had grown around her like a shell that following week had never cracked. Her eyes kept telling Jim long after that: "I'm sorry. You're all right as men go—but I don't think so much of men." So she had gone her way, leaving the emptiness, and Jim Ivor had gone his, ending here in Club Thirty.

TINY CASSEN, six feet four, 240 pounds, came cat-footed into the office. Tiny had been with Jim when neither knew where they would sleep that night. All Jim's key men went way back, for he was the kind that took a while to make a friend and longer still to lose one.

Tiny was general handy man, coming now from the kitchens where he'd passed some words with old Jules, the chef. He lounged to the right side of the desk—Jim's left ear had been repaired so well that you could hardly see the mark, but you can't patch a broken eardrum that easily.

"The quail empress, or whatever you want to call it, is okay, boss."

"Quail empress?" Jim said.

"Sure. Remember? Young Strelinger wanted it for tonight and phoned Jules how to make it. Quail stuffed with snails turned with crabmeat." [Please stuff to page 84]





The terror of death was upon Burdace as he swung to the left's far end, out of reach of Anson's murderous rage.

THE

SINISTER SHADOW

BY AUGUST DERLETH

ILLUSTRATED BY AUGUST BLEIER, JR.

"My nephew, Burdace Nohr, come to live with me awhile," said Anson then. "When Tom died, I promised I'd take him for a little. He ain't well."
"Maybe I'd better stop in and take a look at him when I get around your way, Anson!"
There was an awkward pause. Anson frowned. Burdace grinned, his frank blue eyes suddenly intense. "I haven't got any money," he said casu-

ally. A single yellow eye of lamplight looked out at them, winking and vanishing when someone took the lamp and moved towards the door with it.
"I'll take the horse around," said the older man gruffly. "Go on in. Here, take this box of groceries along."

Burdace got down and took the box of groceries on one arm, balancing it with the weight of his

"Who are you?" he asked frankly. "I'm Laura," she said. "I keep house for your uncle."

"There was a Laura Kelton, my

LIFE STORY
SHORT NOVEL

An evil spell hung like a cloud over the clean love
of a boy and a girl of the Sac Prairie country

Chapter One

IT WAS a February night in 1920 when Burdace Nohr got off the train at Sac Prairie. He stood looking around him, seeing the sharp-featured station agent, then shifting his glance to the one-armed mail-carrier pushing his little cart to the opening door of the baggage car for the gray pouches.

"You lookin' for Anson Nohr?" It was the rough, short voice of the agent. "I thought he'd be here."
"He is. Up ahead. Get to him. He ain't likely to come for you."

"Thanks."
He walked up the platform to where Anson Nohr sat in his sleigh, leaning forward to talk to another man standing there: A heavy-set, keen-eyed old man with a thick mustache. Burdace looked up at the man in the sleigh, marking the heavy, bushy brows, the thick lips, the wide nose. He met the old man's small flinty eyes.
"Uncle Anson," he said.

"Get in."
The man beside him turned, looking at him with a professional eye, for he was a general practitioner in the village; so he saw not only an engaging face, with clear, honest eyes as blue as the sky by day, but also the signs of an illness now passed over. He touched his mustache and half smiled. "I'm Dr. Grendon."

ally, as if it were not important. He could feel the doctor warming to him when he went around and got up into the sleigh, taking his place at his uncle's side. Anson pulled at the reins. "Good night, Grendon," he muttered.

They swung away, out of the station. Ten years since I've been here, Burdace thought. He reflected dispassionately that he had never liked his Uncle Anson.

Silence held them both; the clomp-clomp of the horse's hoofs made the night's only sound, save for an occasional rustling from oak groves where the wind lifted its voice among last year's leaves still clinging.

"You ain't too sick to work?" asked Anson abruptly.

"I'm not sick," Burdace answered. "I was. I'm not any more. I can work. I don't intend to live off your charity any more than somebody else's. And you know I've always liked farming—liked being close to the earth."

IN THE heart of the woods they came to the cleared space where Anson Nohr's house stood, cradled in a little hollow between hills: A small house with gables and dormer windows, built years before by one of the Yankees come in from New England before the Germans had invaded the Sac Prairie country from abroad, a small house with a veranda and four small white

bag in his other hand. He walked out of the warm, animal odor of the horses into the pleasant smell of wet wood. When he mounted the porch, he saw the yellow lamplight glow beneath the door; in a moment the door was opened.

A young woman stood there, an uncertain smile on her small mouth, her black eyes looking her question from her white face.

"I'm Burdace," he said. "Uncle Anson's out in back."

"Come in."

He strode past her, murmuring that he had brought the groceries.

"Take them to the kitchen, right straight on," she said, closing the door and coming along behind him with the lamp to guide his way.

Who was she? he wondered. He had thought that his uncle lived alone since his aunt had died last year. He put the groceries down on the kitchen table and turned to look at her wondering from the corners of his eyes. She was small, just up past his shoulders in height; she wore her light brown hair parted simply in the middle and drawn down behind her head to a small pug low on her neck. Her eyes were almost harshly black in her white, unruddered face, and her lips were as startling a red without unnatural color. She could hardly be more than 20, he thought, two years younger than he.

Her glance met his suddenly, lowered, and swung back again.

Complete in this Issue

aunt's youngest sister," he said speculatively, sitting down now.

"I'm the one," she answered, and went on. "You must be hungry. Was the train late?"

He was conscious abruptly of an intangible change in her manner, and in a moment he felt himself caught in a sudden tension manifest in the room. He glanced at her, but she was no longer looking at him; she was going about her work, putting plates down on the table, getting his supper ready. He turned.

Anson Nohr stood there, slowly pulling off his mittens. In the warm lamplight, he looked somehow less fierce, less grim; he looked almost handsome, with the long black hair flowing back from his high forehead, his bushy eyebrows raised, his lips pushed outward as if to complement the speculation in his eyes, fixed not on Burdace, but on the girl across the room. By the merest flicker, his glance shifted to Burdace.

"That's Laura Kelton," he said. "Been housekeeping for me since her sister died. Your aunt, that was. But I won't have her long; reckon she aims to get married off to Kester Bliss."

His casual words broke the tension. He came over and sat down to the table, throwing his mackinaw over the wood-box near the back door. Burdace looked at Laura, who was bent, red-faced, over the oven.

"Congratulations," he said.

"Oh, it's not for sure yet," she answered without looking up.

"Women never know their own minds," said Anson roughly. "It's time to set a day. We won't need no show. Burdace here can be a witness."

Still she did not look up; nor did she answer. Tension had returned to the room, hanging like a tangible thing all around them. Burdace kept his eyes fixed on the girl, waiting for that moment when she must look up; and that moment was coming. She had got the bread out of the pans now and turned toward the table.

"Here it is," she said. "Hot bread."

For a moment her eyes met his and made her slight smile a lie. She was afraid. She was afraid of something said, someone sitting there! Instinctively, he looked to his uncle, but the older man was not looking at either of them. His pulse began to pound a little faster; something of her fear reached out to him.

"Her bread is good," the older man said abruptly. "That Kester'll be getting himself a woman too good for him."

Burdace was hungry; he ate quickly, as was his custom, but presently he was overcome again by the conviction that something was wrong, some note of error persisted. It was not alone the fear already made manifest in Laura; there was something beyond even this. The impression was incongruous, and, because of this, doubly strong. The three of them sitting to this meal around the lamp on the table struck him irrationally as ironic, as a symbol

of some terror lurking in the house. This puzzled him, filled him with a kind of wonder that he should experience it; it was beyond his understanding.

Outside, the wind was rising, the sound of it in the trees driving into the room above the pleasant singing of the tea-kettle on the stove. The old house creaked, and somewhere a shutter banged. Anson dropped his fork with a clatter; his brows drew down; he muttered something and got up, going quickly from the room. In a moment his steps came back to them from the stairs he mounted.

Burdace looked across the table. "What's the matter?" he asked in an urgent whisper. "Laura, you look as if you'd seen a ghost."

"It's a shingle torn away," she said in a low voice. "There's no shutter." She met his eyes briefly, her gaze steady now. "I'm not going to get married to Kester Bliss. I'm not going to marry anyone. He—it's his idea. Bliss has the farm next to this one; it's—"

Abruptly she was silent. The footsteps were coming down again.

The fire went out of her; she changed; once again she looked down to the plate before her as Anson came into the room, scowling fiercely, and sat down again, resuming his meal as if no interruption had taken place.

"There's a lot of work you can do, Burdace," he said. "I don't mean to work you too hard, but you'll have to work. I can't afford to keep you."

"I mean to work," Burdace said shortly. "I like farm work better than city work, and it's best for my health I should be here."

"Well, it's late now. After supper we'll go to bed. You can take that front room, the south gable room."

Laura did not look up.

IN THE night he awoke. By habit a light sleeper, he heard the sound of someone walking down the stairs and pausing there, half way down. He waited for the sound to come again, but it did not. He could not sleep and got up. Crossing silently to the window, he looked out. The wind had died away, the sky had cleared, the moon shone brightly from the southwestern sky. The woods beyond the clearing were dark. He drew away from the window, opened his door cautiously, and walked out into the hall to the head of the stairs, where he leaned over the railing to look down.

He saw the old man almost immediately, standing motionless midway down the stairs, one hand gripping the rough banister. "Who is it? Who's there?" The harsh whisper rose to Burdace; he would have answered, had he not realized that his uncle had not looked in his direction, but was peering into the dark below. "Is anybody there?"

A faint, uncertain fear took possession of him. What was it held his uncle there on the stairs? "Emma," the

older man said in a low voice, "Emma, answer me!" Burdace watched, at once drawn and repelled by this scene below him: The older man taut on the stairs, all his being emanating a fear so strong that Burdace felt it almost tangibly.

A hand touched his arm gently, and he turned.

Laura stood there in her nightgown, one finger to her lips, her head shaking. She drew him away.

"Don't watch him. If he finds you, if he sees you watching him—I should have told you."

"Who is it down there that he talks to?"

"Your Aunt Emma, my sister."

"She's been dead a year."

She nodded quickly. "Go into your room and stay there. Don't come out when you hear him." Her voice was an urgent whisper.

He retreated, but came forward again to catch hold of her hand. "But look here," he said, "tell me—what is it you're afraid of? Everybody's afraid of something."

"It's nothing," she answered. "Please go back."

He could not understand what went on in the house, and he could not fix upon anything in his memory to explain what he had heard, what he had seen and felt. He got up after a little while and got out the letter his uncle had written him, reading it by the light of a furtively struck match.

You can come here for a year anyway. I promised your dad, and whatever I might have done, I never broke a promise to Tom. But you'll have to work, and work hard. And you might not like it. We're not like other people.

He could not think of his Uncle Anson as a man who might be not quite sane. Everything about him spoke of his sanity, everything but this curious occurrence. There was something idling in his memory about his Aunt Emma; his father had said something, but try as he would, he could not bring it back. He was puzzled, too, about Laura. How did she come to be here, alone, with his uncle? He looked at the letter again. It was not the kind of letter he had expected, but he had always looked upon his uncle as surly. "Tight," his father had said. Sitting there, he caught himself listening for any sound, but he heard nothing more; for all he knew, the old man might have come up to bed again; he could not be sure. The whispering had ceased.

Chapter Two

HE WAS awakened by his uncle's rising. It was 5 o'clock, and darkness still held the Hollow. But already there were sounds below. He got out of bed and dressed, but the older man had preceded him. When he got to the kitchen, his uncle had already gone out to the barn. Laura was at the stove.

"He's out in the barn," she said in answer to his unspoken question.

"He's feeding the animals." She spoke hurriedly, as if she were anxious that he follow the older man.

"Does he always get up this early?"
"In the summer at four. This is late."

He went out into the winter dawn, guided toward the barn by the lantern-light showing yellow from its wide doorway. The morning air was cool but not crisp, as if the winter had gone out of it. The wind made a low keening in the woods south of the farm, and the air was thick with the smell of the river not far beyond the hills.

He stepped into the barn, and the rich fragrance of hay, of animals and dung assailed him; it was not unpleasant. The lantern hung near the door, and another burned farther down among the stanchions.

"Can you milk a cow, Burdace?"
His uncle rose from among the animals.

"Guess I can."
"Good thing. Don't want to have to teach you any more than I need to." He came up to him and took hold of his arm. "Good muscles, too."

"I'm not weak, if that's what you mean."

The older man's grip tightened, and the perceptible change that came into his cold eyes was ominous. "But there's one thing you'll have to learn, boy—that girl, Laura. You're both young, and you're like to be drawn to each other. I don't want that to happen. Understand? I'll be watching."

He felt a wild rush of anger, but held it down. "What's she doing here? I thought you were alone."

The older man laughed. "She's poor. I've taken her in. She came to help take care of Emma when she was dying—she was a long time at that. Laura hasn't got anyone else. She's like you, see? It's my private poorhouse." He chuckled at this joke he had made.

Burdace pulled his arm away. "Let's get to work."

"And she'll marry Kester; I promised him that. That'll bring all this land together, all the land this side of Stone's Pocket. Almost a thousand acres."

Burdace began to understand something of the girl's fear now, his anger working within him; but he controlled himself, he restrained himself from argument, from any expression of his unreasonable anger. He tried to calm himself by reminding himself that after all it was as the older man said: He was here on sufferance, and perhaps she was, too. But he could not keep everything to himself.

"A thousand acres!" he exclaimed. "But Uncle Anson—who wants all that land?"

"I do."

"And after you, do you think it'll stay that way? Is Bliss going to give it to you, then? What do you mean?"

"My heirs, then," said the older man,

acting now as if he had been caught in error and speaking quickly to conceal it.

"Your heirs—your heir, you mean," said Burdace. "I'm the only one."

The older man grinned. "Not by a long shot, you ain't—you ain't even the one. I'm leaving this place to Laura."

Burdace was too startled to speak. He stood and gazed at the older man as if he had not heard correctly, but he had heard; moreover, he had understood even more. It was not the land after all, the older man wanted; it was Laura. And marrying her to Kester Bliss was another way of keeping her close to him, keeping her where she would never be very far away. He felt a quick loathing for the older man and turned away.

BURDACE was alone in the east sixty when Dr. Grendon found him. Anson and his hired man had taken a load of wood down to the farm and left Burdace to the cutting; driving past, Dr. Grendon saw him there. He stopped his sleigh and came up, his small grandson staying with the horses. Burdace watched him come.

"Is that old fool taking everything again?" he asked. "Scrub and all—he'll have worthless land here before long. But a man never could talk sense to Anson. He said last night you weren't well. What's the trouble?"

The old man's frank eyes were honest. His interest was clearly no idle curiosity. Burdace smiled. "That was a year ago. I had a touch of pneumonia and I thought for awhile I wasn't going to get out of it. But I'm all right now. Uncle Anson probably thought I'd be no good to him and was prepared for the worst."

The doctor turned and looked down into the Hollow where the farm buildings lay, then back at Burdace.

"There've been curious stories in Sac Prairie," he said. "This girl, Laura Kelton, for one thing."

"She's all right."

"I guess so. The Keltons were all pretty fine people. Good family. But she's the last one now, and they never had much. Improvident lot, even if grimly honest. And then about Anson—he's a hard master; I wouldn't need to tell you that; you could find it out for yourself soon enough."

"I've found it out."

The doctor looked at Burdace, his whole attitude saying that there was more he wished to say; and yet he could not say it.

There was something about him to defeat reticence. Once more Burdace felt that quality of warmth about the old doctor. He came over close to where Grendon sat and touched him on the shoulder.

"I've been thinking about my uncle," he said. "Last night something happened." He told the story hurriedly.

The doctor sat stroking his mustache. "I was away when Emma died," he said thoughtfully. "Up

north. It was a queer thing. She had some stomach trouble or other; she had been chronically ill for years. Suddenly she died. It was little more than that. She died and was buried, and there was some talk. Maybe some of it reached him."

"You don't mean there was any question about her death, Doctor?"

"Do I mean that? I think not, no. But he never treated her very well, you know—or perhaps you don't. She might have had an easier life, might even have lived longer if he had tried to make living pleasant for her. Does that constitute a question, or not?"

"I think I understand. There's something going on in that house. That would explain it."

"As for the girl," continued the doctor, "talk to her alone sometime."

"I mean to."

Anson Nohr and his hired man came up. The older man's face cleared at sight of the doctor idling there. He leaped from his heavy sleigh, grinning. "Come to lend us a hand, Doc?"

"Hello, Anson. No, I was calling on Ortell's—thought I'd drop over and take a look at your nephew."

Burdace turned to work once more, lopping limbs from an oak felled before the doctor's coming. The doctor said good-by ceremoniously, and made his way leisurely down the slope.

Anson watched the doctor's receding back a moment, then turned to Burdace.

"Did he say anything?" he asked. Burdace looked at him. "What about, Uncle Anson?"

"Go on, get to work," said the older man roughly. He turned and looked back down the road, following the doctor's sleigh with his eyes until it disappeared around the hill.

ON THE second evening Kester Bliss came over. At supper that night, Burdace had noticed how listless Laura was; she had expected him. Bliss was sitting at the kitchen table when Burdace came in from the barn. He was a short, thick-set man near 40, with a thin mustache and gray-green eyes looking out of a chalky face. Laura was still at work among the dishes; her face was expressionless.

"This is Kester Bliss, Burdace," she said.

Bliss got up and stuck out his hand. "How do," he said. "Heard you was comin' to work here for Anson."

He sat down again, and Burdace bent to wash his hands. From time to time he glanced into the mirror above the wash-stand; he could see Bliss there, and occasionally Laura, as she moved to and from the sink. Bliss watched her, his heavy-lidded eyes fixed in an unblinking stare, his thick mouth edged with a proudly possessive smile. She did not once look at him, keeping her eyes down. Burdace lingered, washing himself slowly, but at last he was done. He turned without moving away from the wash-stand.

"Where's Uncle Anson?" he asked.

Bliss looked at him casually and said pointedly, "He's gone to bed, I guess. They go to bed pretty early around here."

"Eight-thirty," said Burdace. "That's too early for me." He went over to the table and sat down.

Bliss looked quickly at Laura, as if expecting her to make some protest; but she said nothing. "Anson don't like visitors after ten-thirty," he said. "I got to go at ten-thirty regular."

"Maybe Uncle Anson doesn't get enough sleep," said Burdace, smiling. Something about Bliss's flat smugness irritated him; in addition to this, there was Laura's uneasiness and her manifest unhappiness. "They tell me you're a pretty big farmer in these parts," he went on presently.

"One of the biggest and best," agreed Bliss, grinning. "Got close to five hundred acres. Almost as big a place as Anson's."

Laura finished and left the room briefly. Bliss looked across the table, frankly measuring Burdace, his gaze unfriendly. Burdace smiled. Laura came back into the room, and Bliss got up.

"We can go into the front room," he said.

"I guess so," agreed Laura without enthusiasm.

"You don't need the lamp, do you?" asked Bliss, and took it from the table.

"No, I'm going outside for a little. It's too early to go to bed. I never got much before ten-thirty."

They faced each other for a tense moment over the lamp; then Bliss followed Laura into the front room, and Burdace stood up in the darkened kitchen. Cat-like, he went over to the clock, and, by the light flowing into the room from the snow-covered earth beyond the windows, turned the hand ahead twenty minutes. Then he went outside, into the damp, fragrant air.

He sat down on the bench on the back porch, wondering what went on in the front room. To his instinctive dislike of Bliss was added now a deep sympathy for Laura, an angry sympathy complicated by the knowledge of his own helplessness to aid her. There was nothing similar between those two, no point of contact. He thought, too, that Bliss did not look well, and began again to ponder what plan his uncle contemplated. It was as if he coveted Bliss's land, too, in addition to desiring Laura kept close to him. He found himself coming back to what Dr. Grendon had said about his aunt's death.

After awhile he left the porch, went around to the side of the house, and looked into the window. There they sat, both together on the straight-backed sofa, one of Bliss's arms around her shoulders. She sat up straight, unbending, with her ears given to his voice, but her eyes on the room's shadows, away from him; she looked proud, defiant, withdrawn. Bliss's wheedling voice was ready; it came out to Burdace thinned by the walls

of the old house, tempered by the heavy plush of the room's furniture within, and the moist air outside. He drew away, filled with unreasoning anger and yet not entirely without a kind of sharp amusement.

He went through the snow toward the wooded hill on the east, making his way across the moon-flecked snow, webbed now with tree-shadows, to the crest of the ridge, where near an ancient oak tree he could look to the yellow lights of Sac Prairie, aglow on the river's edge far in the east, where the hills across the Wisconsin made the rim of earth dark against the sky. There he stood, not far from where he had cut wood the afternoon before. A south wind was rising, carrying the warmth and odors of spring, the smell of growing things, and he was filled with a kind of tenseness, a taut longing for the season of green leaves and flowers once more. After a little while, he became aware that in the heart of this longing for spring was the thought of Laura, like a bright, burning flame.

Chapter Three

HE WAITED an hour before he went back down into the hollow to the house. The light was in the kitchen now. He went around and stood in the shadow on the east side of the porch. In a few minutes Kester Bliss came out and strode away. The light went out.

Burdace slipped into the kitchen. "Laura," he called softly.

She came out of the darkness to stand before him.

"I set the clock ahead. We'll have to move it back. Twenty minutes."

He went over to the clock and moved the hand back so that it was only eight minutes past 10. When he turned, she stood at his side, her face strikingly white in the moon-illuminated dusk of the room, her eyes dark pools fixed upon him.

"Why did you do that, Burdace?"

"Because I wanted to talk to you," he answered. "I wanted to talk to you alone. I didn't think you'd mind."

"I'm glad," Laura responded, moving toward the lamp.

"We don't need a light," he said.

She drew back. There was a moment of awkward silence. He was conscious of her, and his pulse came faster.

"Laura—you can't marry that man."

"I can't hold him off forever. Anson would—"

"He hasn't got any hold over you. You don't like Bliss."

She released a deep breath and shuddered. "I hate him. Ever since Anson got it into his head we'd make a good match, he's set him on to me, urged him to call."

She was still. He drew her close to him, released her arm. They stood for a moment awkwardly silent, looking at each other in the moonlit dusk. The clock's ticking came ponderously

out of the darkness along the wall, and a faint scratching as of mice sounded from beneath the floor. He touched her hair hesitantly, put his arms gently around her and held her to him. She clung to him, turning her face a little. He touched her cheek with his lips, and suddenly kissed her. She made no protest, but held close to him. He looked down at her, and saw tears glistening in her eyes.

"Laura," he whispered. "What's the matter?"

"It won't make any difference. I'll have to marry him," she said. "Burdace, I'll have to do it. I'm all alone, I haven't any place to go."

"We're both alone," he said gently.

"Anson offered me a home," she said. "He said there was no one else. I didn't know about you. I suppose I was told, but I had forgotten. He promised me the farm when he died, and he gave me a little money—wages—to buy clothes I needed. And then this began, with Kester. I don't understand it; he doesn't like Kester, but there's his farm."

Burdace asked abruptly, "What was it about the other night when Uncle Anson was on the stairs?"

"I don't know." There was a short silence, into which the clock's ticking pushed inexorably. "He's been like that often. I think he's not quite right sometimes, but then again, he's the same as always—but at night he stands there listening, he thinks he hears someone, he talks queer—as if to Emma, as if he saw her or heard her, always listening, listening. And he's afraid of something."

"But he makes me afraid, and I am afraid of him. I know he mustn't find us together alone like this, in the dark. I don't know what he might do to you or to me."

"Listen," Burdace urged, "any time you could go away, and I could go, too. We wouldn't have to stay." But he spoke half-heartedly, for he realized even as he spoke that he did not want to leave the country again.

"I would. I promised Emma. I told her I'd stay at least until he got married again. And you wouldn't want to go, either, Burdace; you like this place, I can feel it."

There was nothing he could say to answer that.

FOR three weeks there was no change in the tenor of their living, save that Burdace grew slowly more fond of Laura. One evening Anson came looking for Burdace in the loft, forking hay to the horses below. The older man wet his lips with his tongue and stood for a moment watching his nephew. Burdace glanced at him, sensing that something lay on his mind; he kept on working and waited. Presently the older man shifted, tipped his hat on his head, and hawked.

"I hear you been up and around nights," he said.

"I can't sleep too early," Burdace answered.

"You been up when Kester was here."

"That's none of his business."

"But it's mine. I don't like it, see. Kester ought to get time to do his courtin'. He can't, if you're in the way."

Burdace closed his hands around the handle of the fork in fury he strove to control. But his anger blazed forth. "He's not fit to marry a girl like Laura," he cried. "You know it. She couldn't love a man like that."

The older man narrowed his eyes. "Don't go sweet on her, Burdace. If there's anything between you two, I'll take it out of you with my bare hands." "You can't run her life."

"Can't I? I as good as own her now. She ain't got a thing but what I give to her."

He turned and went back into the barn. Burdace stood the fork up against the wall and in a few moments followed him, coming silently up beside him so that he could see the cold hatred in his uncle's eyes. He was aware of a sharp stab of fear.

In the night someone paused beyond his door, listening.

Burdace was at the window, sitting in darkness, thinking over his years: The death of his mother long ago, their early visits to this farm, the hard life of Cincinnati—so hard that he had learned to look back upon his visits to this farm with a longing which had given birth to his love for this land now—the long, slow dying of his father; these things stood out above the neighborhood gang, the school days, the few years at the university, the minutely detailed struggle for existence he had always known. Abruptly he heard footsteps sidling along the hall.

He grew taut, waiting, but in a little while the steps went on, more rapidly now. He got up and went quietly to the door, opening it just enough so that he might look out into the dark-filled hall.

Anson Nohr was standing at Laura's door, his great hands holding to the jamb on either side. As Burdace watched, the older man tried the door gently; but it was locked. He swung around.

Burdace was startled into immobility, but it was not at Burdace that the older man looked. He gazed down into the well of darkness lying along the stairs. For a moment he made no move, no sound. Then he struck a match and held it aloft, revealing his wide eyes, his working lips, his disheveled hair.

"Who's there?" he called in a harsh whisper.

The clock's ticking came dimly up to answer him.

Anson went around to the head of the stairs and stood there.

"Is anybody there?" he asked.

The match burned out. He lit another. Then, slowly, step by step, he went down the stairs. Burdace inched his door open and moved silently over

to look down to where his uncle stood alone in the darkness. Burdace watched in fascination not untouched with a sense of the uncanny.

"Emma!" called the old man abruptly.

The clock gave back its inexorable ticking. There was no other sound. But Anson replied as if someone had spoken to him.

"No, no. Go away, go back." His breath came spasmodically, as if he labored under great emotional strain.

"Leave me alone. Go back."

A cold chill held Burdace now.

He edged away, watching the older man carefully, and then fled noiselessly to his room, where he stood behind his door, and watched how slowly, slowly the older man came up the stairs. He waited for him again to turn to Laura's door, but Anson went directly to his room. Burdace stood briefly waiting for him to come out again, but the creak of bedsprings told him the older man had gone to bed.

In the morning Burdace lingered until he saw Anson go out to the barn. Then he came swiftly downstairs to where Laura worked in the kitchen. "He's looking for you," she said. "Hurry up."

"Listen, Laura, I've got to see you alone somewhere, today, soon."

"He wouldn't like it."

"He's going to town with the pigs this afternoon. I'll be gathering sap in the east ridge. Can you meet me at the syrup camp over there? You can come as soon as he's gone."

Her glance held his briefly, her gaze unfathomable. "All right," she said. "I'll come if I can. He usually goes about one-thirty."

Chapter Four

CARRYING two heavy pails of sap yoked over his shoulders, Burdace came around the hill slope in the warm March air, his eyes fixed upon a bluebird on the line fence near by.

He looked eagerly toward the one-room cabin used as Anson's camp. There was no sign of Laura. He had seen Anson drive out of the hills toward Grell's millpond twenty minutes before; there would have been time for her to reach the camp by now, even if she came afoot. No horse stood there, and no snow remained to betray her footprints. Everything was as he had left it. He paused at the boiling-pan and emptied the sap. He added more fuel to the fire and stood looking toward the hill crest over which she must come.

"Burdace!" Her voice came softly from behind him.

He saw her framed in the shack's doorway and went quickly to her. She drew him inside.

"Someone might see us. That Kester would make trouble."

He put his arms around her and

kissed her. "Laura, last night," he began immediately, "I saw Anson at your door, I could tell—"

But she shook her head, a frown on her forehead, her mouth turned down in an expression of distaste. There was something fragile about her standing there, some helplessness inherent in her.

"That," she said. "I know that. It wouldn't be the first time. I keep my door locked and a chair against it. I always have."

"But some day he'll go in!" he protested. "Laura, come away with me, come away now—before something happens."

She looked past him thoughtfully. "He'll never come in," she said. "He's been there so often before. Something always keeps him from coming in. It's his conscience."

"It's no way to live, always afraid, always thinking any moment he might turn on you, or Kester Bliss—"

Her hand tightened about his. "Burdace, I'm not strong enough to go away."

"I won't go without you, Laura."

He drew her almost roughly to him, his arms awkward about her, and held her for a moment to look down at her white face, at the soft lines of her mouth, at her dark eyes burning briefly into his before her lids closed down.

"Laura!" he whispered. "Laura, I love you. Come away with me now."

She shook her head slowly, so slowly as to be almost imperceptible. "If it weren't for Emma, Emma and her dying, and the promise I made her—" She stopped suddenly and looked at him. "And for you, Burdace, where would we go? Where could we go? We haven't got anything. We wouldn't even have each other long."

"I never had anyone, much," he said miserably.

"Nor me," she said. And in a moment, she added, "This farm, he said—this would be mine some day. Just to stay and keep house for him after Emma went. It's going on two years now."

"Besides, I signed a paper that I'd keep house for him when he made that will. If I don't now, I can't claim anything."

"You didn't sign anything that keeps you from getting married," he said.

"No, I didn't, Burdace."

"Then we can get married anyway, and stay on here."

She looked at him for a long moment. "You don't know your uncle," she answered. "If we did that, he'd kill you."

He laughed, but she was not smiling. He caught her close to him, searching her face for any sign of gaiety. There was none; her eyes were impassive, grave.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean it," she answered. "I know what goes on in his mind. It's that I'm afraid of, not his coming to my door at night."

"Then you won't do it?"

"I didn't say that. We could wait a little while. I would want to wait, because, you see—well, I love you, too, Burdace, or else I couldn't marry you, and I wouldn't want anything to happen to you."

He considered this silently, but presently said, "Why does he push Kester at you then?"

"Because Kester's weak, Kester wouldn't stand in his way if it came to a showdown."

"Do you know what you're saying?"

She nodded and got up. "I'm going back. Give me some syrup to take along, just in case."

"You don't have to go yet," he protested, but he rose, nevertheless, and got her a quart can filled with syrup.

"If he knew I was here, I don't know what he'd do," she said. "I'll get back in plenty of time."

He said no more, kissed her gently, and stood watching her slip out of the cabin. From the threshold he saw her make her way along the slope toward the crest of the long winding ridge, her slight figure bent against the south wind.

WHEN he came down into the yard behind the house at suppertime, he heard Laura's voice rising angrily from the kitchen. He glanced toward the barn. Anson was back, as he had guessed. He strode rapidly toward the house and into the kitchen, where he saw the older man bending over Laura, holding her arm in the grip of one of his great hands.

"You went there," he was saying. "I saw tracks behind the barn." "Let go of me!"

Burdace sprang forward and caught at his uncle, forcing him to loosen his hold on Laura, almost unbalancing him. Instinctively, the older man lashed out with his clenched fist, but Burdace dodged nimbly, coming up at Laura's side to face Anson with hot, angry eyes.

"What's going on?" he asked.

"You—she was at the camp this afternoon. I seen her tracks," said the older man. "Let me hear you deny it."

"She came up to get a jar of syrup," he said quietly.

"You could have brung it."

"I didn't know she wanted it."

She stood rubbing at her arm, her glance at the floor, her lower lip caught in her teeth. Looking at her, Burdace was filled with renewed anger at sight of her arm's red flesh where Anson had gripped her. Impulsively he turned to the older man.

"You keep your hands off her," he shouted.

He was unconscious of her tugging at his coat.

"So!" said the older man, his slit-eyed gaze fixed upon him. "Got this far, have you? Just gettin' syrup—that's what you say."

"Laura and I'll be getting married as soon as we can," Burdace said defiantly.

The older man's fists clenched

slowly; his mouth curved to an ugly smile; his eyes burned. Abruptly the room was tense with menace, the clock's ticking marking time, the chickens' cackling in the March evening air outside coming as if from some remote place. They stood wordless, looking at each other across the kitchen table, violence smouldering between them. Abruptly it was resolved by Laura.

"I'm not marrying anybody," she said flatly. "Sit up to table. I'll put supper on."

The tension was broken, but there remained behind the older man's eyes the dark smouldering hatred, and he ate in sullen, ominous quiet.

March gave way to April, and April with its buds and early blossoms drew toward May, with its heavens of flowers in the new spring's green. Plowing, dragging, seeding made of days an endless succession of labor. Since the day of Laura's visit to the syrup camp, Burdace had been given a new task; now it was he who must go into Sac Prairie when the necessity arose. Anson seldom went, and then only when Jim, the hired man, was at work near the house to watch Burdace for him. This was Anson's doing, but Burdace made no complaint; he went willingly.

Coming back from the village late one May afternoon, Burdace saw a buggy swing out of Grell's driveway toward Sac Prairie. He turned his horses a little, so that the buggy might go past the wagon proceeding leisurely in the middle of the road. As it came toward him, he saw that it was Dr. Grendon's. The doctor held the reins and, seeing Burdace, shouted, "Hold on, Burdace. I want to see you."

Burdace drew up at the roadside. The doctor's buggy came to a stop several rods farther along, but immediately began to back up. Burdace jumped lithely from the wagon and walked back.

"That's a beautiful horse you have, Doctor," he said, coming abreast of the buggy.

"My boy, I must have the best. My son can have his cars, but give me a horse any time." He looked at Burdace, his eyes questioning him, a dubious smile on his lips. "How've you been, boy?"

"I feel a hundred per cent better since the winter's over. Just to smell this air, Doctor—that's something after living in a city."

"Yes, yes—that's wild crabapple. You can have everything else if you give me wild crabapples and lilacs in bloom. So you're well, you've had no 'spells,' you're fit as a fiddle." He laughed, but he was puzzled.

Dr. Grendon leaned forward and touched him with his buggy whip. "There's been word around that you're sullen, morose, melancholy. Do you know why that might be?"

Burdace was astonished, but pres-

ently said, "I suppose even in these isolated places, people talk."

"That kind of talk has a source. Your Uncle Anson."

"But it doesn't make sense that he'd talk that way." He remembered suddenly how he had come one evening upon his uncle at the telephone, and how quickly the older man had concluded his conversation in monosyllabic murmurs.

"Look here, Burdace, keep an eye on your uncle. Just watch him. Don't let him get anything on you."

"I don't follow you, Doctor."

"A man who stands on the stairs at night to listen to a voice he ought to know comes from a conscience he's half throttled can be expected to listen to other voices."

"That's a riddle."

The doctor laughed. "So are we all, Burdace. But not as much as your uncle. Some phases of his character are clear as crystal. Laura Kelton, for instance. What do you think?"

"We're going to be married as soon as we can."

"And you told your uncle, with his heart set on Kester and his own design on Laura?" He shook his head. "My boy, how long do you think a man like Anson can control himself? It's been going on for almost two years, that fighting within himself, that constant struggle against something too strong in him to be rooted out. He's forgotten slowly everything but himself. He was a great man for church once; he hasn't been inside one since Emma died."

"What do you suggest?" "Get away from there as soon as you can."

"I won't go without Laura—and she hangs on because of some promise she made to Emma, and because Anson's willed her the farm on condition that she stay to keep house for him."

The doctor looked at him from puzzled eyes. "If she says that, she has something more that she doesn't say," he mused. "She's afraid of him in some ways, and yet in some she's not." He leaned back into his buggy suddenly. "Well, if you need advice, call on me. Just telephone or drop in when you're in town."

BURDACE walked thoughtfully back to the wagon, mounted to his seat, and started off. He was troubled and perplexed by everything Dr. Grendon had said to him. But in all this, there was nothing definite, nothing tangible enough to take hold of, nothing to come clear. Only hints, warnings, vagueness. Neighbors avoided Anson Nohr; he went nowhere. What was it the doctor had said in effect but this: Emma Nohr died strangely, and Anson certainly helped her dying by his neglect of her, and now was cursed by conscience assailing him by night. Nothing was there to support a charge, nothing to condemn, nothing to point to and say: Here is the proof of it!

Then the doctor's other words came

thronging back in memory: *There's been word around that you're sullen, morose, melancholy. That kind of talk has a source. Your Uncle Anson.* He was aware again of a faint fluttering of fear, a hint of impending disaster. He was not entirely free of foreboding when he drove at last into the yard toward the barn.

Anson came out to catch the lead horse by the bridle. "Took you long enough," he grumbled. "They have to make something first?"

"No, they were busy in the stores," he replied shortly.

"Take the things inside. I'll tend to the horses."

Burdace carried the groceries into the kitchen where Laura was. Bending above them on the table, he said in a low voice, "Will you come out tonight, after he's gone to bed? Down in the orchard?"

"Wait for me," she said. "I'll try."

Then he turned and went out again, knowing he would find Anson waiting to see how long a time he took to spend with Laura.

Chapter Five

THEY had come to this secrecy increasingly in the past weeks, the necessity of being alone with each other growing within them both, the difficulty of gratifying that necessity mounting each day under Anson's watchful eyes. Only twice before had they slipped away from the house in the dark. Waiting in the blossoming orchard, Burdace was held in a deep pool of apple and plum bloom fragrance. He sat against the trunk of an old gnarled tree.

The night was still, windless. It was almost 11 o'clock, and evening sounds had long since faded away. She was there suddenly, beside him, her footfalls whispering in the grass, and wordless, she came down to sit at his side, to slip into his arms. He kissed her.

"Uncle Anson?" he questioned her. "Sleeping." In a moment she added hurriedly, as if eager to speak and have done. "Burdace, we can't keep this up. He'll find out."

"Don't you want to?"

"Oh, of course, you know I do. I love you, Burdace."

"Then we'll keep it up till we're caught. We haven't done anything wrong. There's nothing wrong about this—except in his mind."

She shuddered suddenly, violently. "Are you cold?" he asked.

She shook her head. "No. I just thought about his knowing." And then: "Emma used to say when a spell like that took her it was someone walking over her grave. And she did die not long after."

Almost too casually, he asked, "How was it when she died? Did she have an easy death?"

"No—she suffered. She wanted to say something, but she couldn't get it out. She tried to point at Anson, and

then, just when we thought she was going to say it after all, she died."

"Laura, do you think he might have—hurried her death any?"

"Indirectly, yes. He gave her no care. He seemed to be willing her to die and she knew it."

They were silent, filled with a deep warm glowing of pleasure at being alone together. They dared not be away from the house too long, lest Anson wake and find them gone; so in a little while, they made their way across the pasture and to the house.

Looking up to the window of his room, Burdace saw his uncle watching them approach, only a brief glimpse before the older man drew away. He felt a sudden chill and turned to Laura.

She had not seen. He thought at first he would say nothing, but instantly he began to fear that Anson might have gone to her room, might be waiting there for her. "We've been seen," he said. "He was in my room, looking out. I just saw his face."

She turned a frightened glance to his. "Burdace—if he knows—"

"He knows all right. Listen, you go to your room, and if everything's all right, open the door and let me know. He might be waiting there for you."

"He might be in your room," she cried.

"I think I can handle him," he answered.

She hesitated, but at last went ahead. They slipped into the house, locking the door behind them. No sound came from above. They went up the stairs and he stood in the hall until she had gone into her room and come out again, nodding. Then he might expect Anson in his own room. He strode cat-like to his door, listened for sound which did not rise within, and opened the door.

No one was there.

He was puzzled, knowing the quick anger which rose in the older man. He'll come then, he thought, and sat down to wait. It was after midnight now, and he thought that his uncle would come as soon as he thought Laura asleep. But he waited in vain; there was no sound; the old house slept.

In the morning then, he thought.

BUT in the morning Anson gave no sign of having seen them. He was less sullen than usual, his small eyes bored at them, but a smile held to his thick lips. He looked from time to time at the clock.

"We've got a lot to do today, Burdace," he said.

"A good day for it, then," Burdace answered. "That sun's warm as summer, the way it looks."

The older man pushed away from the table and said, "Hurry up."

"I'll be right out, Uncle Anson."

He flashed a glance at Laura, whose white face was set in its usual mood while the older man was in the room. But as soon as he had gone outside, a faint smile touched her lips, her eyes lit up, she grew more animated.

"I could have sworn I saw him in my room last night," he said. "I saw him looking down at us out of the window."

"He saw us," she said calmly. "I can tell it by his actions. You watch him today, Burdace." She was anxious.

At supper time Burdace was tired after a day in the fields. But the older man was not yet finished. "There's still light," he said. "There's a little we can do after supper, and save us more time for tomorrow."

"What is it?" asked Burdace.

"There's a piece of fence to fix just behind the syrup camp. I want you to do that, Burdace. When you've finished, come to the loft—I want to shift the hay that's left there."

Burdace was puzzled. A fence not bordering pasture could wait for weeks. He set out for the woods while the sun still shone low in the western sky. He had reached the foot of the ridge and the sun had gone down before a great fan of saffron afterglow, when he remembered that he had repaired the fence a fortnight ago. The older man had forgotten; they had both forgotten. He turned and went leisurely back, coming to the barn from the far side.

He entered the barn and was about to mount to the hay-loft when he saw a dim shadow flung athwart the ladder, the shadow of a man crouched above. He hesitated briefly and stepped back out of sight, should anyone look down. An instinctive wariness took possession of him. He stood for a moment pondering what to do. He looked toward the shadow once more; the loft door must be open a little way, or there would be no shadow. Noiselessly he went out of the barn, took the small ladder that hung on the barn's side, and went back to the far side. He put the ladder quietly up against the wall and went up to the loft door, raising his head only enough so that his eyes could look into the loft.

He could not see; hay obstructed his view. He went up another rung, but still he could see nothing. He edged up the ladder and into the hay-loft, creeping along the floor with muscles taut, his pulse pounding. Cautiously he rose behind the loose hay piled there and looked toward the opening in the loft floor.

Anson Nohr waited there, watching. Fear enveloped Burdace. He saw something swinging gently above the older man, but at first he could not make it out. As his eyes became accustomed to the gathering darkness in the loft, he saw the thing above Anson was a rope, looped over a rafter. He stared at it, looked to the older man waiting there, and back to the rope.

At the end of the rope was a hangman's noose!

In a moment of crystal clarity, he put together the meaning of the scene before him. The doctor's words came back once more: *There's been word around that you're sullen, morose, melancholy.* Anson's talk! And here was Anson waiting for him to come

aloft, waiting to stun him, fix the noose around his neck, and leave him hanging there. Dry-throated and trembling, he could hear the words his uncle would be saying—I could see it coming. He acted that way. Couldn't get over his pa's death, I reckon.

The older man stirred restlessly. Burdace moved backward, tripped and fell. Anson stood up, saw him, and came fiercely toward him, a low, animal sound welling from his throat. Burdace scrambled up, dodged him, and ran for the ladder. But the older man was too close; he could not make it. Without looking behind him, he jumped, seized the hanging rope, and swung over the opening in the floor to the far end of the loft. He landed on his feet and whirled around, tense for Anson's next move, his heart pounding, the terrible fear of death throbbing within him, pressing him close.

ANSON was standing there, gauging the distance between them, his eyes burning with hatred, and his mouth brutally working in his frustrated rage.

The moment was eternal—Burdace waiting for his uncle's next move, unable to know what was coming. The older man could leap just as he had done, and if he landed where he had landed, he might be able to catch him before he could swing away. He was not afraid to give battle, but his uncle's rage was murderous, his intention was not to fight, but to kill.

Abruptly the moment broke.

Anson leaped forward and up, grasping toward the rope intended for Burdace. But he did not hold to it; somehow he had failed to close his fingers upon it, and he fell backward, crashing through the opening in the loft floor to the stanchions below, where he gave back only a long sobbing groan and was still.

Slowly, slowly, cold with fear, Burdace shook himself free of his inaction and walked carefully to the opening in the floor, where he bent to look down. Anson lay inert, still, crumpled in a twisted heap with his head bent at an unnatural angle.

He went down the ladder, still cautious, lest the older man lay there only hoping to trick him into coming within reach of those great hands. But his laxity was not acting; he lay still. Burdace dropped to his knees beside his uncle and put his hand where the older man's heart should be beating. There was no movement. He lowered his ear to Anson's breast. There was no sound. From the way he lay there, his neck was broken. He was dead.

Burdace got up and ran from the barn to the house.

Kester Bliss was there, sitting at the kitchen table, but Burdace did not see him. He saw only Laura beyond him, her glance fixed upon his white face, his disheveled hair. He passed Kester and put one hand on the table as if for support.

"Uncle Anson . . . he's dead. He fell

from the loft. Call Doctor Grendon."

Kester got up and ran awkwardly out of the house toward the barn.

Laura came over to Burdace, touching him gently. "Burdace, you're white as a sheet. You're trembling. What happened?"

He told her jerkily.

"I'll call the doctor."

"Call the old doctor—not his son."

She went to the telephone and rang through, knowing all the neighbors on the line would hear. In a few moments she came back to where Burdace stood, still trembling.

"He's coming," she said.

"I thought I was a goner that time," he said. "He meant to kill me, to make it look like suicide."

Kester came to the porch and pulled open the screen door, his pasty face working in fury, his eyes venomous, pale now with defeat. "You!" he said to Burdace. "You did it—I know. You pushed him. He told me all about it—about you and Laura. Maybe both of you did it to get his farm. I'll get help; you won't get away."

Burdace started to his feet, but Kester was gone, his voice drifting back in the quiet May night. "Murderers!"

"Don't listen to him," she cried. "Burdace, what shall we do?"

He looked at her, and sat down. He was still breathing hard. She came over to where he sat, bent down and kissed him.

"Laura, what if they don't believe me?" he whispered. "Laura, what if they believe Kester?"

"Kester was right here with me."

"But it's your word alone—and he'll hate you now, knowing he can't have you either. Laura. . ."

The telephone rang. "That's Kester ringing through," she said. She went swiftly to take down the receiver, putting her hand across the mouthpiece, and stood there listening intently. Burdace could see her hand clench over the mouthpiece; then abruptly she put the receiver back.

"Burdace! He's calling up a mob—he's calling for Ed Burke's hounds. He can get here before the doctor can. Come on, we'll run toward Otwell's."

She caught hold of his hand and together they ran out of the house. They ran out of the yard, down the slope and up the road. "Cut through the woods here," she said suddenly, breathlessly. "It's shorter."

They plunged into the thick growth of trees and shrubs, unmindful of thorns tearing at their clothes. It was slower going up the slope, and they had chosen unwisely, for the hill was steep. Behind them suddenly rose the voices of the hounds.

ABRUPTLY Burdace paused. The cool air had driven fear from him.

"What are we running for?" he asked. "Laura, we haven't done anything! We've got to go back."

"The hounds—"

"Are you afraid, Laura?"

She shook her head. "No, I'm not afraid, Burdace."

Hand in hand they began to walk down the slope, into the rising clamor.

The hounds swept upon them from around a grove of cedars, and instinctively Burdace leaped to the top of a stump there, drawing Laura after him. There they stood, clinging to each other, but no longer afraid, when the mob came upon them, Kester Bliss in the lead, as they expected him to be.

"Murderers!" shouted Kester, and he turned upon the dogs, lashing them with his voice, urging them to attack.

One of the dogs leaped forward, bounding up toward the stump, fangs bared. Burdace turned to kick at him.

The sharp crack of a shot rang out, and the dog crumpled.

"Call off your dogs, Ed."

Coming across the slope from the direction of the road behind Burdace and Laura was Dr. Grendon. Three other men were with him. All were armed.

"Sorry I had to shoot that dog, Ed. But I've got the sheriff along with me."

After a momentary pause, Kester Bliss pushed forward again. "Take 'em, then—the murderers! I saw it all, I saw—"

The sheriff shouldered his huge bulk past Burdace and Laura, where they stood almost forgotten, and like a nightmarer descended upon Kester Bliss, reaching out a huge hand to take him helplessly by one arm.

"Come along, Bliss. We'll just have a little talk, eh?" He paused. "And as for the rest of you—get along home before I recognize any one of you. There's a law against mobs like this, and I'm bound to do my duty."

But already the mob had thinned out, and in a thrice they were gone—all those dark, ominous figures, Ed Burke and his hounds, too, all save the dead dog lying near by—all were gone. The sheriff turned to Burdace and Laura.

"We're going on to the farm for a look at Anson. Guess there's no doubt but that it was an accident, but we'll have to have an inquest later on, just the same. It's the law."

At his side, Kester said nothing.

The sheriff, Kester Bliss, and the two deputies went back the way they had come.

Dr. Grendon started away, too, but turned. "Are you coming?" he asked.

"Yes," said Burdace, as if in a dream—free of the nightmare of vengeance, free of the clamor of pursuit.

The doctor turned, smiling quietly to himself. Burdace stepped from the stump and caught Laura in his arms. Then together they began to walk down toward the road toward freedom from the brooding terror of Anson Nohr, holding to each other's hands, walking without words, for there was no need of words to know the overwhelming wonder and beauty of the love that bound them now forever.

THE END

LIFE

-and One so Far Away



1863



1917



1944

I WAS in your room today, Richie. Maybe it wasn't quite sensible since it was Decoration Day and you know what Decoration Day is like in Grantsburg. First of all I had Gramp to send off to the parade. Remember last year when he was one of Grantsburg's two surviving members of the G.A.R.? This year he was the only one.

After that—well, I almost bullied your father into putting on his 25-year-old A.E.F. uniform. Those awful spiral puttees! But I didn't succeed. The uniform was too tight. And I think he was really sorry.

Last night he told me, "They want me to talk at the Legion lunch tomorrow, Madge. I can't do it. I'd feel ashamed—I've had three meals a day and a clean bed to sleep in. The kids who've been living in stinking jungles are the ones who ought to do the talking—and they're not here."

I couldn't answer at first, Richie. For the moment I felt like strangling the members of the Legion who'd insisted your father was to talk. Only I knew they meant well. They fought in the last war, same as your father did. They're our friends. So I coaxed Dad till he finally said "yes" in a tired way. Then I wrote out a speech for him—one that didn't have any mention in it of "the sacrifices we're all making."

That was last night. This morning when Dad waved to me from the corner the way he always does, he seemed pretty well reconciled to a Grantsburg Decoration Day.

I had to face one, too. It was up to me to be at the grandstand at 3—or else.

But it was only a little after 10 and I had a lot of things to do before that, so I went to the room you commandeered when you started junior high, the downstairs room with its own entrance.

It's awfully easy to waste time. With all I had to do I just stood there, looking at those high school banners on your wall, trying to remember what I'd come for.

STORY



It was your teething ring. Remember, Richie? The little mother-of-pearl-and-silver ring that was in your top left-hand desk drawer with the DiMaggio baseball your father got for you when you had scarlet fever. I've given that baseball to the children's ward at the General Hospital, by the way, and the boys there are as thrilled to touch it as you were—heavens! it's only six years ago.

I wanted your ring for Vincenta Belcampo, for her new baby. Nick Belcampo's away. In Iceland, Vincenta thinks. She isn't starving, of course. She has the army allotment. And when Frankie was born our Legion auxiliary gave her what's called an essential layette.

Only, a girl of 19 like Vincenta, whose husband has never even seen her baby, wants a little more than essentials. That's why I cut a whole armful of jonquils and tulips and lilacs—not for that row of graves in the cemetery that the Legion decorated this morning with flags and wreaths. Those boys who went to school with me and who are lying there won't begrudge them to lonely little Vincenta who's living in back of Nick's closed tailor shop.

You should have seen her face, Richie, when she gasped, "Flowers, Mrs. Brewer! Flowers! You don't know how I miss them!" And then her eyes grew tremendous when she opened the little box I handed her and she saw your teething ring. She was crying a little when she felt those tiny dents you bit into the silver when your baby teeth were coming through. I went over to the carriage and looked at Frankie till she recovered.

The baby grabbed one of my fingers with each of his soft little fists, just the way you used to, Richie. It was all I could do to tell Vincenta that of course I wanted him to have your teething ring—and then to pull myself away from those clutching little hands.

After that I went back to your room again. For those nursery rhyme and fairy tale and children's story books on the lowest shelf of your bookcase. You can't remember, of course, Richie, but your father and I had fun buying those books. And even when you were quite a big boy, 11 or 12, you looked at them sometimes. I know that because I'd find them on your bed or on the dresser.

That's why I know you'll be glad I gave them to the Barton Settlement this morning as a gift from you.

I HAD to go home to dress then. Postman Stevenson met me outside the house. He had a letter. I only hope I thanked him and didn't snatch it when he told me, "This just came in. I didn't see why you and Mr. Brewer should have to

took my place he smiled at me from the American Legion box. I smiled back—at least I tried to, but my eyes were blurry because the boy scouts were marching past and I remembered how you used to march with your troop.

Then the governor was talking. Over the loudspeaker. He was booming about We. "We did this. We did that!" till I wanted to scream at him, "You did nothing! It was boys like Richie! It was men like Nick!"

I didn't, of course. I sat there and ripped my handkerchief to bits and tried to think of that cunning baby with his chubby hands. Of anything but that smug, self-satisfied politician. . . .

Only the governor wasn't talking any more. Someone was reading. And the words coming over the loud speaker were the familiar, "We cannot consecrate, we cannot dedicate, we cannot hallow this ground . . . it is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work—"

Richie, I can't explain it. It's so long since Lincoln said those words. I know them. I've always known them. But when I heard them today the knot that's been tied around my heart all week, ever since the telegram telling us you'd died in action came from the War Department, broke. For the first time, the very first, there seemed to be some chance of a meaning to it all. The voice was still coming over the



When your dad made that speech today, you were there with us, Richie

wait for regular delivery tomorrow."

You know, Richie, I had to sit down when I got indoors. Then my hands were trembling so I could hardly get the letter open and when I did the words seemed to blur and run together. Because it was just one of your regular letters. Kidding about mud. Telling me you were getting to be quite a parrot trainer. Telling your father that he'd lost his bet that you were through growing. Two inches more this time.

It was funny that reading a letter should take so long. It was a quarter to 3 before I'd finished. I didn't even have time to dress—just to put your letter in my purse. For your father.

I didn't reach the stand till twenty after 3, and I don't suppose I'd have got there at all if I hadn't had a special ticket. Your father must have been looking for me because as soon as I

loudspeaker—

"That these dead shall not have died in vain—" and another gold-star mother beside me—I've no idea who she is, Richie—was clutching my hand. I knew she was repeating and praying, just as I was:

"That these dead shall not have died in vain."

You were only 18, Richie. You hadn't even finished growing. But you're dead now. And, Richie, my hope, my prayer is that because you have died that baby of Vincenta's, those little tykes at the settlement house, those boys playing baseball yesterday may never die in some muddy jungle as you did, my darling. That somehow this war may bring peace—lasting peace. That you—"that these dead shall not have died in vain."

THE END

Fashions for Phyllis*

BY CATHERINE ROBERTS
FASHION COUNSELOR

PHYLLIS is a swing fan. Frank Sinatra's special method of "giving" not only makes her go all-over dreamy but helps her to bear things . . . that is when she has things to bear, like family problems. Oh, yes, she, like most teen-age girls, has what it takes, especially when it comes to what she wears . . . for the right clothes have a way of "helping one bear things" too. Her suburban life calls for "two-time" clothes; things she can sun-tan in and yet can convert to town-going outfits by the simple addition of a skirt, a bolero perhaps, a blouse. The main thing about the clothes that Phyllis likes is that they too "give" and in a big and eminently practical way. Give a look.

A pink and black plaid Everfast cotton sun-dress. Addition of black blouse makes it a two-timer. A Young Originals design by Emily Wilkins



Two piece koda shantung printed with white and multi-colored rings



Green and white check play suit has separate skirt for company



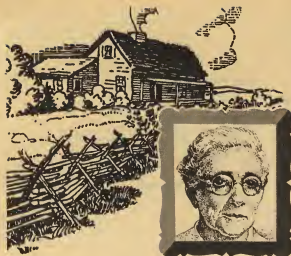
The new sun-back play suit of crinkled cotton. Drawstrings do it



Playsuit with its matching skirt becomes demure, quaint

*TEEN AGE HEROINE OF DEAR FRANK SINATRA

(See page 8)



In this humble Missouri farmhouse was born America's best-loved woman columnist of the air. Her beautiful tribute to her mother is a tribute to all mothers in these trying days

BY MARY MARGARET McBRIDE

I HAVE been in dread of Mama leaving me ever since I was a naughty little girl having to go to bed home from Grandma's house. I cried so hard after a bad dream. Yet somehow I never thought it could really happen. Other girls' mothers might leave their daughters, but surely not mine.

"Mama, I want you to go on to be a hundred and ten, will you?" I implored her.

I can see now her little crooked smile and her dark eyes soft with something that surely must have been sympathy for me as she answered: "I'll try my best, Sister."

She would look startled if she could see the thousands of letters people have written about her.

"Sister, those can't all be for me!" she would likely protest and blush so vividly that momentarily she would look like the picture in our old photograph album of the girl who married Walker McBride.

Nothing is more characteristic of Mama than the story of that wedding night.

Her prayer meeting she and Papa met Brother Johnson, the Baptist preacher, at her Uncle Dallas's house and were married. There was no planning ahead. Nobody except Brother Johnson was told about it, not even Uncle Dallas. Some of the neighbors called it an elopement but Mama never dreamed of such a thing. Years later she explained to me: "Pa had just given your Auntie Belle a wedding and I knew he couldn't afford another!"

So like a sensible considerate daughter, she got the busiest without making him feel that he hadn't done as well for her as for her sister.

That January night in an open buggy behind a pair of black horses hurried until they gleamed like fine satin, Mama and Papa rode swiftly through bright moonlight to the farm where Papa and his father bachelors it together. Next morning Mama got up at 4:00 and started to clean house. With mild understatement she said the place looked about as you'd expect it to with men doing for themselves.

The Missouri prairie farm where I was born was the first of a succession of homes she made for us. With a single exception the houses were bleak and unpainted, with not even the grace of age to give them beauty. There were no bathrooms, no electric lights, no conveniences at all and everything had to be done the hardest way. But Mama's scrupulous cleanliness, hard work and love redeemed them.

Her first thought in a new place was to plant a pansy bed and start sweet peas climbing on strings along the garden fence. When they bloomed she always found time to keep one bunch in an old jelly glass in the best room and another on the kitchen table.

Her children came quickly, little stair-steps. Papa's father, an invalid, lived with us and Mama took care of him until he died. He said a daughter couldn't have been

better to him than Mama was. Grandpa McBride was a brilliant impractical man who had piled up debts. Mama worked along with Papa to pay them off. She thought it was fine of Papa to take over his father's obligations.

"Mrs. McBride, I never see you without a broom in your hands," more than one neighbor said to her in those days. And if she wasn't sweeping or stooping over a dustpan or bathing a baby before the kitchen fire, she would be baking bread, churning butter, making rag rugs, stirring up lye soap in great granite kettles, canning the winter's supply of preserves, pickles and ketchup, bending through the long winter night over a child with the croup.

She worked seven days a week the year round, but she often told me with quiet pride, "Your papa never allowed me to milk the cows." Some farmers' wives in our section did have milking and other outdoor chores added to their regular tasks.

It was the accepted way of life for women and Mama asked nothing better, yet like so many American mothers she hoped her daughter wouldn't have to work so hard. She didn't care that her own hands got stained and calloused and so swollen that she couldn't wear her wedding ring, but she wanted my hands to stay smooth and soft. She coveted pretty things for me, too—like who so seldom had a new dress and who wore her old shoes until their feet were on the ground.

She didn't mind any of this—but I did. Very early I made up my mind that some day, somehow, I would give her all that she had never had—clothes, travel, leisure. With the first money I saved in New York I sent for her to come on for a visit. I was almost sick with excitement at the prospect, yet all the night before I expected her, I lay awake worrying. Might she be too bewildered and miserable among skyscrapers and skyscraper manners to enjoy herself? I knew her clothes wouldn't be very nice, that she'd never been in a great city in her life, and I remembered her broken nails, her workworn hands, her stooped shoulders. Would my new city friends see past all that and realize how wonderful she really was?

I needn't have been afraid about Mama. As it turned out, I was the bewildered one, not she. First of all, I met

the train and Mama wasn't on it! The redcaps hadn't seen her nor the Traveler's Aid nor the depot and cried. A sympathetic bystander telephoned my apartment to see if a message had come and reported that Mama was there in person! I'd just met the wrong train and Mama, who'd never seen a taxicab in her life, had taken her first one to my apartment!

That was the startling beginning of an amazing experience. Actually the more sophisticated and city-bred my friends were the more they seemed to like my mother. They positively fought over her. Every day somebody borrowed her and took her to the flower show, symphony concert or play. Mama confided to me that she believed most of them were downright homesick. She loved them all.

I had worried how she would take the sights and sounds, the alarms and excursions of New York, but I needn't have. Yes, the buildings were tall and the streets were crowded, but Mama had been told about those things and when she found them as described she accepted them in the same matter-of-fact fashion that she accepted life on the farm.

In spite of the strict way she had been brought up, nothing seemed to shock her, either. On that first trip one friend invited her to Coney Island and by mistake got into a show that had dancers with almost no clothes on. The hostess was in a panic and apologized abjectly. Mama's answer amazed her. "Poor girls!" she said sadly. "How glad I am that Sister doesn't have to do that for a living."

A FEW summers after that first visit, I got a special assignment to write a story about the exiled royalty in Europe and Mama crossed the ocean with me. On the voyage she tasted her first champagne (it made her sneeze), was seasick but very game. As for the ex-royalty, they were just poor lonesome creatures to her though some were still surrounded by loyal followers who maintained the old ceremonies of bowing and curtsying and going out of rooms backwards. Mama didn't think much of all that but she felt sorry for them, especially the nostalgic king who cherished some ground carried with him from his former kingdom in which he had planted a few flower seeds from his home garden.

Mama could never get enough of flowers. At Versailles, for instance, she was much more interested in the begonias than in the famous Hall of Mirrors. And while Stella (a friend of mine traveling with us who regarded Mama as a second mother) and I quarreled as to whether we should or should not take an open carriage to the Petit Trianon where Marie Antoinette had played at being a milkmaid, Mama, who never took sides in our arguments, admired the magnificent trees in the park. Later, she laughed out loud at the queen's miniature dairy. It was funny to her who had churned so many pounds of butter from necessity that a queen should make butter for amusement!

That was a fine trip. [Please turn to page 56]

Reprinted from the book, **How Dear To My Heart**, published by the Macmillan Company

MY MOTHER

Joe O'Hara was a smart cop. But he hadn't counted on falling in love

Broadway's Meanest Racket

BY JANET WELT

"YOU wanted a uniform—" Deputy Inspector Coles pointed out. "Well, now you've got one."

In the straight chair before him, Joseph O'Hara, Second Grade Detective, shifted his hundred and eighty pounds of bone and muscle uneasily.

"Yes, sir," he said, "I wanted to join up. But I didn't figure on this fancy dress—"

"Fancy dress, my foot! Listen, O'Hara, practically every big shot in Washington has okayed your wearing this uniform on this assignment. It's war work and big time war work! If you don't want it—"

"Oh, I want it, sir," Joe said, very quietly. "Naturally. I just don't see—"

There was a saying on the force that the only way you could tell when the Old Man was excited was that his brogue came to the front. It came to the front now, rich and powerful.

"If you'd be keeping your big mouth shut for a moment, I'd be making you see!"

"Yes, sir," said Detective O'Hara.

"This is the trickiest racket," the Old Man said slowly. "And the toughest to crack, that I know anything about. You take it when some woman marries a soldier for his insurance. Well, she has to use the mails to defraud and it's just a question of time before we catch up with her.

But in this other racket there're two strikes on us before we set out. Most of the men won't even lodge a complaint. They're too ashamed of having been taken for such suckers. You know how it is—"

Joe nodded. His boyish good-

natured face was suddenly hard-jawed and older.

"I know," he said. Then he frowned. "But I still don't see where there's much dough in it."

"Oh you don't! Look here—suppose one of these girls gets herself engaged

to only two soldiers a month? And that's being conservative. Well, let's say each guy comes across with an engagement ring that's worth—about two hundred bucks. The jeweler has to get his cut, of course—but suppose he and the girl split fifty-fifty? That's a hundred dollars a sale, or two hundred a month for the girl. Naturally some of these dames make fewer transactions and hit it richer. Say they take one guy for a five-hundred-dollar ring, and a fur coat thrown in. They have the same arrangement with some of these furrers. The soldier pays for the coat, probably sees his girl friend wear it out, and then it's back in the store the next day—or whenever the guy is shipped out. The girl gets half the purchase price refunded to her—maybe more, we don't know yet."

"But it's mostly done with engagement rings, isn't it?" asked Joe O'Hara, late of the jewelry squad of the plainclothes division.

"It seems to be," the Old Man said. "That's why you were assigned. Joe took the liberty of slouching a little in his chair and stretching his long legs.

"Let me go over the way I'm to operate again, sir. Say I'm all fixed up like a sergeant from Fort Totten. Say I've got the uniform and the papers. Say I'm loose on Broadway, flashing a bankroll. Then how do I contact one of these dames? Has that been arranged?"

"Naturally," the Old Man snapped. He glanced at a typed memo on his desk. "See Policewoman Green, Juvenile Aid Bureau. Of course this racket's not her field but Times Square's her beat. She's been picking up delinquent girls there since before the war. Knows the area and the regulars. She's done all the groundwork for us. Done it well too!"

"Groundwork?"

"Read this," said the Old Man and handed Joe the memo. It consisted of a list of girls' names, with information about them.

Joe read only the first one all through.

Cells herself Barbara, it read. Last name unknown. No known means of support. About 23, well dressed, attractive, unusually refined appearance. Brunette, fair complexioned. Hangout: Crystal Cafe. Missing from city October through February, 1942; August through October 1943. Summer of '42 seen constantly with naval lieutenant, name unknown. Described self as engaged to him. Spring of '43 saw situation with marine captain, name unknown. Both officers seemed to be in funds.

There were half a dozen more names. In each case the details were similar. Joe said: "Good leads?"

"Green thinks so," the Old Man said. "Of course these women aren't in her line—too old for the juvenile



Jean wheeled on her roommate, snarling, "You got us into this." "I thought I was playing it smart," Barbly said.

bureau. But she keeps pretty well posted on the whole Times Square picture. And she says none of these girls add up right. You'll notice they all have the same record. All attractive, none of them with visible means of support. Long periods away from Broadway—maybe while they're working out of town. Hang out, together, in expensive bars. Very choosy who they pick up, but all of them seen going steady at one time or another with a serviceman who's well heeled. They'll go for you."

Joe grinned. When Joe grinned, it was obvious why women always liked him. "Thanks for the compliment, sir, but I don't know as I'm a particularly fast worker."

"Policewoman Green'll point them out to you," the Old Man said dryly. "From then on you're on your own. Make the pickup. Establish yourself as a genuine army sergeant—a lonesome country boy with plenty of dough. If you play your cards right you'll be buying some girl a ring and we'll be making arrests in a couple of weeks."

The Old Man grunted. Then he permitted himself the glimmer of a smile. "You'll do all right, O'Hara. Probably like your work too. Personally—well, I don't know how you feel about brunettes but—that first one on the list—"

Joe glanced at the first name on the list. "Barbara," he said thoughtfully. "Yes, sir, I can see what you mean—"

And he whistled softly.

That was the last time in his life that Joe was ever to kid about Barby.

THE middle-aged policewoman from juvenile aid knew her stuff. Even Joe, with a slight prejudice against policewomen, had to admit that. Exactly two nights later, a little after midnight, she piloted Joe into a dimly lit, luxurious bar, just off Times Square, established him in a corner table and pointed out three girls across the way.

"The one in the middle," she said, "is Barbara. The one on the left calls herself Jean. I'm not sure about the third."

But Joe wasn't looking at the third. Or at Jean. Just Barby.

She had on a dark green dress. Plain, high neck, long sleeves. She wore a small bright clip at her throat and no other jewelry.

Her skin was very white. Her face, Joe O'Hara thought, was the saddest face he'd ever seen on any human being.

There was a tall lemon-colored drink on the table before her. It was almost untouched, though her friends' glasses were empty.

She was beautiful with the kind of beauty that takes a man by the heart and makes him feel sad instead of glad. That makes him suddenly remember, with shame, every cheap or bad deed of his life. At least that's the way it was with Joe O'Hara.

"You're kidding, of course," he said roughly to Policewoman Green. "That's not the one."

The woman, a kindly, worn-looking creature, sighed briefly.

"That's the one. Lovely, isn't she? Doesn't look the type, I must say."

Joe wanted to say that she couldn't be the type! That no girl with eyes as sad as that made a living by practicing cheap rackets on soldiers. But hard-boiled dicks don't talk that way. They aren't even supposed to think that way.

"She doesn't at that," Joe muttered.

"Good luck," said Policewoman Green. She sounded more tired than ever. After a moment she patted his shoulder and left him there.

Joe sat where he was for a long time. He even ordered another drink. He knew he oughtn't to. He knew a chance like this might not come again, and that those three girls in the corner table, across the room, might get up and go away any minute. . . .

But still he felt a strange, undetective-like reluctance to go over and attempt a crude pickup of the girl who called herself Barbara. For one thing, she didn't look like the kind who'd be at all easy. Was it good tactics for a girl who supposedly made her living out of soldiers to look so quietly remote and unapproachable?

Detective O'Hara finished his drink hastily. Then he got up and made his way slowly across the room. By the time he reached that table he was uncomfortably aware that his face was red and he was sweating. He wasn't creating at all the debonaire, easy impression that an experienced guy like him ought to be able to manage—

He looked from one to the other of Barby's companions. He couldn't, to save his life, bring himself to look at Barby herself.

"I don't suppose," he said, addressing the rather gaunt pale girl on her left, "that you young ladies would let a lonesome soldier buy you—buy you just one drink?"

There was complete silence. The gaunt young lady was staring at him in silent astonishment—as though he'd proposed something unheard of. The third girl was eyeing him speculatively, with a faint smile. Joe was conscious, from top to toe, that he was creating anything but a favorable impression. Though of course there must be plenty of bashful soldiers, too, who didn't know how to pick up girls—

It was Barby, amazingly, who answered. Though it wasn't Barby he'd asked. Her voice was not like her appearance. It was husky, with a careless, slurred inflection—

"Sit down, if you want to, Sergeant."

The other two took their cue from her. The gaunt one smiled, the little plump one began to chatter. Joe ordered new drinks for everyone.

Within fifteen minutes the other young ladies had left. And Detective O'Hara realized, gratefully, that he was doing better than he had any right to

do. Could it be that this Barby was the kind who preferred the bashful type to a smooth article?

As she finished her new drink she seemed somewhat friendlier. She asked him a few, half indifferent questions about who he was, and where he came from. When he named a town in Michigan her sad eyes smiled a little and she asked him how he liked Broadway.

There was time for them to make a midnight show, if they didn't mind missing the beginning. Barby said she didn't mind. Joe took her to the Paramount.

SHE was a different person in the show. She laughed at all the jokes—even the stalest—with a happy childlike chuckle and watched the sad or exciting sequences with parted lips, leaning forward. Just like a child. She was crazy about the stage show and clapped herself to death to bring back the blues singer—

Joe didn't hear the jokes, or the exciting parts. He was too busy watching Barby.

After the show he suggested a bite to eat. He was a lot more on the ball by now. After all, just because a girl was beautiful—

He suggested, as though it didn't matter, a couple of places to eat. One of them he knew was a joint which paid a percentage to girls who brought in servicemen. The other wasn't. Detective O'Hara found himself holding his breath as he put it up to her.

But neither place seemed to strike any particular spark in Barby. She smiled vaguely and said it was "up to him."

He suggested some other places. He'd spent the last three days brushing up on his Broadway. Whichever she'd chosen would have told him something about her—

But she was too smart for him. Or else—it was just possible, of course—she was on the square.

They were moving slowly, completely hemmed in by the crowd. Every conceivable face and figure and voice was beside them, behind them, passing them, talking in their ears.

Barby seemed to be watching the crowd rather than listening to him. Suddenly she said, in her husky careless voice: "Look here, soldier, you don't have to shoot the bankroll on me. Those gyp joints you mentioned will set you back four bits for a cup of coffee."

"Listen—" he was going to protest angrily.

But she squeezed his arm, suddenly. "What say we go uptown a little? I know a nice place where they'll feed us fine. And the bill won't look like the national debt either."

Smart, huh? Ideal, if you were building a guy up to a big killing later. Or . . . or . . . it wasn't impossible that the girl was on the level!

The thing that bothered Joe was that he felt so relieved about it. That didn't



MY HUSBAND is a Prisoner of the JAPS

BY ALICE K. BURNS

as told to FRANCES BORDEN

EVERY woman can understand how I felt when I read the report of the Japs' inhuman treatment of the defenders of the Philippines. My husband was one of those men. As far as I know, he is still a Jap prisoner of war.

The story related by the army and navy officers who were lucky enough to escape from Jap prison camps told of the brutality, indignities and humiliations which the Japs inflicted on our battle-spent, weary men who had been taken prisoner in the Philippines. They told of the Japs' cold-blooded savagery, their indecent treatment of our men, their wanton, ruthless killings.

I turned sick as I read this official report. I was learning at last, in vivid, terrible detail, the horrors my husband must have lived through. Previous to this time, my knowledge of Jap character combined with no great effort of imagination had painted a frightful picture for me of the experiences my husband must be undergoing as a prisoner in Jap camps. But now I knew that the worst, most fiendish conjurings of my mind were mild in comparison to reality.

I have been acquainted with Jap brutality for some time now. My husband has been a Jap prisoner for two years—since mid-April, 1942.

I didn't know John had been taken prisoner then. I didn't know definitely what had happened to him until March 13, 1943—and even then I couldn't be sure. He was just a name on a Red Cross list of Jap prisoners that had been compiled some time before. He

might be dead, he might be dying at that very moment. The only real proof I could have that he was still alive was to get a letter from him.

No letter came, of course. There was no mail for me from John for almost two years after the fall of the Philippines. Not until this past October did a single thing arrive, and then it appeared to be a cruel Jap trick.

It was a postcard—a typewritten postcard, with no handwriting on it anywhere. And it had no date! It might have been written two years before or two months. How could I know?

The card read:

IMPERIAL JAPANESE ARMY
I am interned in Osaka Umeda
Busako Prisoner of War Camp.
My health is usual.
I am working for pay.

Please see that everything is taken care of.

My love to you and all: JOHN.

What an impersonal message from a husband to his wife! For two years I had been waiting for some message from my husband, and now I received this: A typewritten-postcard bearing no date, not even a written signature. I couldn't even be certain that John had really written the card.

And then authorities confirmed my fears. They advised me that the postcard might very well have been faked. It was by no means improbable that the Japs had kept John's identification tags and papers and written the card themselves to deceive me into thinking he was still alive.

As the months passed, I still had no answer, and if I had known anguish where there was nothing but silence from my husband, it was a thousand times worse now. Did that postcard, the only tangible evidence I had that my husband was still alive, perhaps prove just the opposite?

Since the postcard was undated, I still don't know, but at least now I have

more hope. Because just a few weeks ago I received a letter from Osaka, Japan—not a postcard, but a real letter, written completely in longhand, from John. I can't be deceived about this: I know John's writing too well. I'm sure John must have written the letter himself, although whether it was before or after the postcard I cannot tell.

You see, the letter I just received is very old: It was dated July 3, 1943. I'm well aware that something might have happened to John in all the months that have passed since then. Much as I try to keep atrocity stories from mind, it's an impossible task. They keep piling up, spilling over, running round and round in my head until I can stand no more.

This letter I just received from John, written in Japan last July, told me he hadn't had a letter from me since December, 1941! He hadn't had a single word from me in almost two years!

Probably now it is almost three years! Judging from past performances, I doubt if the Japs have permitted any mail to go through to him even yet.

I wonder if John knows why he has received no mail. I wonder if he thinks by now that perhaps I've forgotten him, that I've stopped caring. What a foul trick for the Japs to play: Undermining the confidence of our boys; tormenting their minds as well as imprisoning their bodies!

There must be many of you women who have had your own terrible experiences, and unfortunately, there must be many more of you who have yet to endure them. The road to Victory is full of heartbreak, and the opening of the second front and increased action in Asia is bound to affect many of us who have been comparatively untouched by the war up to now.

When I look back on everything now, it seems impossible that all this has happened. It's like a nightmare from which I'm struggling to awake.



After her husband was reported missing, Alice Burns joined the WAAC, and in serving her country found some surcease from sorrow

There were so many happy days for John and me once. How long—how terribly long will it be before we can experience them again?

When I recall the old days it's incredible for me to realize all the changes that have taken place. What a different person I've become in these short years. The things that meant so much to me once—success, glamor—mean less than nothing to me now

Alice Jane, Hollywood glamour girl, gave up her career in 1937 to star solely for her twice-decorated Marine husband, John A. Burns, one of the Philippines' gallant defenders

This letter, written two years ago, and the photo, forwarded by a Marine official, are the last proof Mrs. Burns had that her husband was still alive. Information received since then may have been forged by his merciless captors

The only thing that matters is getting my husband back.

Before I met John my life was a kaleidoscope of kleig lights and grinding cameras, beautiful costumes and clothes. It was a parading whirl of previews that I attended with good-looking actors, interviews with the press, fashion modeling and posing for stills. I met celebrities—people I never dreamed I would ever talk to. I was invited to fabulous parties you read about in the papers at even more fabulous Hollywood homes.

MY NAME then was Alice Katherine Jans. You saw me in *Show of Shows*, *Song of the Flame*, *Puttin' on the Ritz*, and other pictures.

I'd been dancing ever since I was a tot, when the family moved from Creston, Ia., where I'd been born, to Fontana, Calif. As I grew up, I danced at Fontana community affairs and it was at one of these, held at the Fontana Women's Clubhouse, that I was "discovered."

Although I was completely unaware of it at the time, Madame DeSilva of Hollywood, world-famous dancing teacher, was watching the show. When it was over she asked to be introduced. "My child," she said, "you must come with me to Hollywood."

"Hollywood!" I repeated, thinking I was dreaming.

Her keen eyes looked straight into mine. "You're a great dancer, Alice Jans. We can use you there."

"But, Madame DeSilva," I argued, "I'd never have a chance. There are so many good dancers in Hollywood, and they're all so beautiful, too."

"You needn't worry," the famous dancing mistress told me firmly. "You're as lovely as you are talented. Don't underestimate yourself, my dear."

Suddenly, the thought of being in pictures was terribly exciting. And if a woman like Madame DeSilva who knew her business said I'd do, perhaps she was right. Perhaps I could be a success!

Madame DeSilva wasn't the type of person to leave anything unfinished. She came home with me that night to talk to my parents.

It was a hard task convincing Dad and Mother. After all, I was young and I still had a year to go before I finished high school. But Madame DeSilva's belief in my talent and her offer to train me, combined with my own eager persuasions, finally won out. Just a few days later I was leaving Fontana on a train bound for Hollywood—the dreamland of every girl in the world.

I was in pictures almost before I knew what was happening.

Madame DeSilva called me into her office just one week after I'd arrived at her studio. "Run over to Warner's, Alice," she told me. "They just called me for a dancer for their new production and I want you to try out."

The picture I tested for was Warner's

unforgettable *Show of Shows*. It was one of the first movies ever to be made in color and took eight months to complete, a fantastic amount of time in those Hollywood days of 1929. The cast was a real galaxy of stars. There were at least twenty of them in the picture, including Monte Blue, Sally O'Neil, and Ted Lewis.

My part in *Show of Shows*—my first part in the movies—was a military dance. In view of later events, it's interesting for me to remember that military angle to my life even then. I enjoyed doing the dance tremendously, and I guess the Warner's executives were pleased because after my scene was shot they added two more solos to the picture for me, an acrobatic dance and a Chinese number.

Then RKO put me under contract, signed me up for two years as a baby star in stock. I was happy.

I don't think I've ever worked so hard in my life as I did those two years at RKO. My daily schedule called for lessons in diction, voice, dramatics, carriage, and long, long hours of dancing. In addition I began to study French, Spanish, Russian and German for foreign versions of films.

It was this ability to speak languages that finally got me my big break—one of the large speaking roles in the French version of *A Woman Commands*, with Pola Negri in the lead.

After that I appeared in so many pictures I can't possibly remember them all. But there was *Puttin' on the Ritz* in which I danced with Harry Richmond and Joan Bennett. And you saw me in *George White's Scandals*, and later in *The Great Ziegfeld*.

Then, in 1932, I became one of the luckiest women in Hollywood. I got a contract that was coveted among Hollywood's hopefuls. I was signed up with Warner Brothers First National as a full-fledged junior star.

It was a thrilling experience. I had never even been in a beauty contest in my life, yet suddenly I was being crowned a queen of queens, selected as one of the most capable girls in the movie industry as well as the most beautiful.

I should have been happier than ever by this time. My name was being prominently displayed in cast listings; my salary was excellent and what was more important, steady; I had beautiful clothes; I could afford a charming home; and I could look forward to real stardom.

But Hollywood's glow had gradually begun to dim for me. Despite all the dates I had, all the men I'd known, there never was anybody I could become really serious about. Maybe it was because Hollywood itself wasn't right for me. Its loud fanfare, its extravagant costumes, its huge, expensive productions and scenery were exciting at first. But after awhile you scraped the surface with your finger and the dazzling glitter came right off.

I knew what I wanted, but it failed to exist for me. I wanted to be liked

and loved for myself, not because I happened to be good-looking, or because I was Alice Jans who had a good contract with a studio and knew a lot of important people. I could think of no remedy though, so I buried myself in my work.

It was June 13, 1935. Some friends had invited me to their home for the evening, and I remember regretting having said that I'd come. It had been a particularly strenuous day. I had been rehearsing new dance routines for my next picture and I was just about dead on my feet.

But something impelled me to go. So instead of calling up and begging off as I'd planned, I dressed with care in my newest gown—a blue slipper-satin that matched my eyes and set off all the gleaming red glints in my dark hair.

When I got there, I found another guest—a tall, broadly built young man with magnificent carriage, who wore the dress uniform of the United States Marines. There was something about him that attracted me immediately and I felt strangely glad that I had come.

By the time John Burns took me home that night we both felt as though we'd known each other all our lives. He was as intelligent as he was amusing and I couldn't remember ever having had such a wonderful time.

After he left, I was too excited to go to bed. I sat in a chair by the window, staring out into the deserted street. The California night was cool, but I felt marvellously warm. I liked this Marine—this John Burns; and I had a snug, happy suspicion that he liked me.

SOON, every spare moment John had off he was spending with me. He was on recruiting duty in California so he had more liberty than he would have had if he'd been on duty at a regular post.

We used to avoid the usual Hollywood spots. I wanted to be with John, not with crowds or celebrities. We'd have dinners in small, out-of-the-way places. We'd walk down country roads in the wonderful California nights, and we used to spend hours talking, finding out everything there was to know about each other. John had been born a few miles south of Chadbourn, N. C., but his family, like mine, moved when he was quite young. He grew up in Jordan, Mont., and graduated from high school there. Then the family moved back to North Carolina—to Evergreen, this time, but John remained in Montana to attend Missoula University.

Travel had gotten into his blood, however, so as soon as he was old enough to join the Marines, he left college. In many ways our lives were quite similar. I'd left school, too, for an adventurous new career.

Even by the time I met John he had already seen plenty of action. He had been decorated twice. The Distinguished Service Cross and the Cross of [Please turn to page 66]

Your Girl about Town



"I love it!" Helen Menken blithely swapped the Broadway footlights for the microphone

LAST Friday I went to a broadcast of the radio Stage Door Canteen, the program that brings songs and skits to the folks at home exactly as they are presented to Servicemen at the Canteen.

The idea of this weekly half-hour replica originated with Helen Menken. I first saw Miss Menken as spiderish Queen Elizabeth when she played with Helen Hayes in Mary of Scotland and later as the pathetic Old Maid with Judith Anderson. Then I lost track of her until someone told me that she had left the stage for radio work.

For six years Helen Menken has played in the radio serial, Second Husband, and hasn't missed a day.

"They can make all the fun they want of soap opera," she says. "I love it!" Miss Menken is tiny, red-haired, intensely eager and dynamic. After she

dreamed up the idea of broadcasting the Canteen, she found a sponsor and made arrangements to get it on the air. She plans the programs, induces visiting stars to appear, and sometimes acts herself.

While Helen Menken talks, her tiny, very white hands are in constant motion. Not until later did I learn what seems to me to be one of the most dramatic things I ever heard. Helen Menken's parents are deaf mutes, and until she was old enough to learn sign language, Helen lived in a strange, silent world—this wonderful woman who brings joy, through sound, to millions of people.

Swing Shift

One night I was at La Martinique when I walked Tommy Manville with three girls. One of them was Billie Boze, his next-to-last wife, and I don't know who the others were. After they'd had a couple of drinks, the girls trooped out to the Powder Room. Before their return Tommy had slipped a \$1,000 war bond into each empty glass!

Maybe Lucille Ball didn't know it, but the gray decor at the swanky restaurant with the numeral name, 1-2-3, is a wonderful background for that red-gold hair of hers; against a gray wall she flames like a torch.

Lucille came into the Club accompanied by a middle-aged woman and her manager. In two minutes flat she was surrounded by men eager to dance with her, though she towered shoulders over most of them . . . remember when tall girls were wall flowers!

At the Casino Russe (where they serve the most wonderful Russian food), Zorina showed up the other night with a perfectly huge red rose—a make-believe one about as big as a cabbage—pinned so low on her hip that she almost squashed it every time she sat down. All the men kept saying, "Eh to mne nie nrva vista," which means they thought it was wonderful.

Next Time You're Hostess

Here's an awfully good canape that is just as nice to serve with soup or scrambled eggs as with cocktails:
Cut a quarter of a pound of mushrooms (stems and all) into tiny [Please turn to page 106]

Eleanor Early takes you on a tour of magic Manhattan,
where fabulous things happen, where dreams come true,
where the scene shifts every second



My Mother

Continued from page 47

"Mama, you look so pretty," I'd cry, viewing her in a brand-new Paris hat that tilted fashionably over one eye. What I'd been thinking about, really, was how she used to run out cold winter mornings to hang up clothes without anything on her head. And one day, looking at her across a marble-topped cafe table, I suddenly remembered how, when we were children, all down at once with something, Mama would keep going day and night no matter how she felt. "Mama, you can even get sick on this trip if you want to," I blurted out and began to cry.

Mama knew why I was crying (she always knew what I was thinking) but she said she didn't see anything to cry about when we were having such a good time. She herself, so quiet usually, laughed a good deal on that trip. She even laughed when we got back, at the stories Stella and I told to friends about her. "You aren't going to believe all those tales the girls tell, are you?" she would say, but she really didn't mind.

She let us mother her and boss her and tease her as much as we liked that summer. But when we tried to shield her from something she thought she ought to have been told, then we had to stand like naughty children and take her scolding. That was the summer the hurricane struck Florida where Papa had moved the family the year before. I heard about the storm somewhere in Germany and cabled Papa but got no answer. I was frantic but decided not to tell Papa, and by keeping American newspapers out of her reach and interrupting all conversations that veered toward Florida I managed to get her back to New York, ignorant of what had happened. Then the customs inspector, noticing Florida labels on her bags, commented gaily, "It's lucky you were in Europe this summer instead of Florida." Stella and I both started talking as hard as we could about something else, but we couldn't fool Mama that time.

"Mary Margaret, I want you to tell me what the man meant," she demanded. So I had to explain. I tried to pass it off lightly by saying that our portion of Florida was outside the path of the hurricane; that Papa never would answer cables; that I hadn't wanted to worry her. Mama's eyes blazed. Her gentleness vanished. I never saw her so mad. "Do you think I'm a child or an idiot that bad news must be kept from me?" she stormed and herself put in the telephone call that assured us of the safety of my father and brothers. If the news had been bad, I know I'd have been the one to collapse and Mama the one to comfort. That was the way she was.

But time, the relentless, was bring-

ing changes. We were all grown now and away from home, on our own. Mama, who had done everything for everybody, was suffering from an inevitable letdown. Even her flowers failed her. Florida flowers grew so luxuriantly in the old coffee and lard cans on the front porch that about all she had to do for them was water them, talk to them and touch them lovingly. No need to protect and tend them as she had done her Missouri posies. It looked as if she might be in for a bad time but Papa got a little car and Mama turned into a back-seat driver. She was helping Papa, she assured me earnestly when I mildly reproached her. And I must say Papa never seemed to mind. Indeed, he actually encouraged her to point out the changing lights and the man crossing the street.

"Gives her something to do," he told me. He understood her so well. Jinny, he called her, when they were having

YOU WHO HAVE LOVED ME

*You, who have loved me, know that I
Shall ever keep faith with you.
A part of my heart shall always be
yours,
Shall always, forever, be true.*

*No matter how long the road may be,
Though we're half the world apart,
I shall keep faith with the dream we
found,
With the memory in my heart.*

*You who have loved me, know that I
Shall hold to the love we knew,
And when peace has come to this
world again,
I shall be waiting for you.*

—CATHERINE E. BERRY

their talks together at night after we children were in bed.

Gradually Mama found other things besides helping Papa drive that she could still do for people—things like sitting up with sick neighbors, keeping a child while its mother went shopping, taking a jar of her jelly or a slip off her African violet to a busy housekeeper. We children made her realize, too, that even though we were settled in homes of our own, we still thought there was nothing like her fried chicken, mayonnaise and cookies so she began once again to send us boxes full of our favorite foods just as she had done when we were away at school. She started to crochet a bedspread for me, too—the popcorn pattern, she said it was.

Grandchildren came and that helped because their indulgent parents let Mama spoil them to her heart's content. She found that, like us, the new generation relished her salt-rising bread hot from the oven, her cookies fat with raisins and nuts.

Then, with as little warning as that given by the big winds that rage over Florida in the fall, Papa, the strong,

the debonair, died. Within the year, Mama's baby, my youngest brother, went too. Mama was the bravest of us all; perhaps she was too brave. At any rate, her great strength gave out. She had a stroke and it left her partly paralyzed. Our active mother was helpless or nearly so.

Naomi and Ora May, her nurses, couldn't have loved her more if they'd been her own daughters. She sat in the sun surrounded by her flowers, she was read to, she was massaged, and the woman who had faced work and worry and sorrow with the capacity to solve all these problems solved this final one, too. With lovely grace she accepted everything we did, hiding gallantly her heartbreak at being served, when she longed so to serve others as had been her life habit.

And then a beautiful thing became evident to her, most modest of women. It was that her children, her neighbors and all who knew her somehow needed her now more than ever. Probably she never really knew how much she meant to each of us but at least she could sense that she was useful and so she was happy again.

There was, for example, the little neighbor with the problem. She never told what it was all about but when her burden pressed too heavily, she liked to go over and sit in the sun with Mama. They talked about flowers, the grandchildren, Naomi's cooking, cheerful trivialities. And the little neighbor went away with new courage that Mama had somehow given her.

My brother Milton lost his young wife and flew to Mama in her armchair for comfort. We all had troubles much more serious than the childish ones she'd soothed away and it was to Mama we turned every time for strength.

She couldn't get about to fix boxes for us any more but even that grief she managed to soften, for she began to give pretty, young Naomi cooking lessons. There was only one drawback. Mama would get so stirred up when she knew they were going to have a session with the mixing bowls that she couldn't sleep the night before. She was even more excited when we went to Maine one summer and I asked her to teach me to make all the dishes of hers I liked best.

MY FINEST memory is of the afternoon she showed me how to bake a sliced apple pie. We had a sort of sublimated kitchen there, a room with beautiful old beams, checked gingham curtains, shiny copper pots that the owner had brought back from Russia and Brittany. Belasco couldn't have created a better setting. Mama was stationed in a Boston rocker in front of the woodburning stove with its big oven. I was at the kitchen table. I cut every little piece of butter and measured every spoonful of cinnamon just as she told me. "A little more sugar there, daughter!" she would advise judiciously, or, "You need a sprinkle of nutmeg now." It was a superb pie. Even Mama agreed to that.

She might admit that she could give me a few pointers on cooking and I teased her for years about the time I came into the house and heard her saying to Papa as she vigorously wielded the broom, "No use talking, Walker, Mary Margaret's smart but I can beat her all to pieces when it comes to sweeping." The thing, though, that she could never believe was that she helped me with my writing. Yet in years, I've never done an article without talking it over with her, sometimes by long-distance telephone.

"You certainly enjoyed this trip, Mama," I told her the fall before she died, when she and Naomi flew up from Florida for a perfect golden week. Every day she was in New York I sat listening with pencil poised while she talked of our past and every word she uttered was priceless copy.

My last sight of her was when they lifted her into the airplane for her return trip. The airport was crowded with people who had come to see her off. The car we were riding in had been held up in traffic and we were late. The loud speaker was bawling Mama's name as we drove up. There was an anxious buzz as friends speculated about what could be keeping us. But Mama was not in the least nervous. Her look seemed almost triumphant. She was having a fine time.

Later my brother Milton told me that when he met the plane at dawn, her eyes shone with excitement and she kept saying wonderingly, "To think that I've flown as if I had wings all the way to New York and back!"

It comforts me to remember her as I saw her that last time and she who was always comforting me would be glad of that. One of the first things I consciously remember about her is the way she could comfort a little girl just by being there. I used to have headaches so severe that I would cry out with agony. There was nothing in the world that seemed to help me then except to be close to Mama. Busy as she was, she'd make a place for me near her. Then the pain would be bearable.

That's more than I can say sometimes for the pain now. And she is not here to help me. Or perhaps she is.

I find myself saying a dozen times a day, "I must tell Mama that," or, "Oh, I must show Mama that great lovely pansy." And not long ago when my tired brain was hunting for a gay spring story, I looked up at her portrait and said just as I would have said had she been in the room, "Mama, tell me something funny that happened to us in Missouri in spring."

Then exactly as if she had answered me, a story sprang into my mind. Was she really there? Did she actually answer me? Does she answer me now when I cry out to her as so many times I used to do: "Are you all right, Mama?" or do I only imagine that her dear voice comes back to me steady, reassuring, tender, just as it used to do!

"Yes, daughter, I'm all right!"

UN-CONFIDENTIALLY YOURS

BY HILDEGARDE

Radio and Night-Club Entertainer



SOMEbody paid me a wonderful compliment recently, by saying that while men love me, women like me. . . .

I wonder if that nice person knows how hard it was to get women to like me. As an entertainer, I realize their importance—women have the final say in whether or not they'll visit the clubs in which I work; they decide whether or not to tune in on my radio programs; and the comments of women have affected my taste in dress, material and conversation.

Perhaps this wouldn't have all worked out so well, if it hadn't been for Anna, my manager. From her, I've learned the right and wrong about female relationships. But few of you are fortunate enough to have an Anna in your lives—which is why I want to discuss the most important rule in feminine friendships—confidences!

Confidences start out by being your bond—and end as your bondage. The boss's wife and her husband's stenographer may be sisters under the skin, but do you think that would be enough to make them sit down and reveal their most intimate secrets to each other? Yet many of us do this—after even the briefest of acquaintanceships!

Before these wartime, needless days, women got away with disliking each other by saying they didn't get along together—but not now! With Tom in the Army, Jim training to be a pilot, and Arthur working a different shift in the war plant, their sweethearts and

wives are necessarily thrown more into each other's company, without the relieving influence of a pair of real pants once in awhile. Because you work with someone, call her by her first name, and occasionally eat lunch or dinner together, that doesn't mean she's your bosom friend. Anna and I still don't know what we think of each other's men, how we spend those hours between good-by one day and hello the other. We do know each other's preferences in food, books, movies, plays and clothes—but only because they are natural things for women to talk about, and the only topics they should discuss beyond business.

Suppose your friend Mary has a problem and wants to talk it over with you. Mary needs to learn that problems are never solved that way—they're still hers to handle—and the moment she tries making a Mrs. Anthony out of you, you'd better tactfully let Mary know that she's the only one who can decide what's to be done, and you're sorry, but she can't expect any suggestions from you.

Perhaps you feel that giving out with a few confidences yourself will ease that barrier you've been feeling with your sister worker. 'Tain't so, because after you've bared your soul, if she doesn't turn away from you, then you'll turn away from her. It usually works out that way, because once you've told something you shouldn't (and isn't that what a confidence is?) you'll be afraid she's going to do the same thing—tell. So you'll suspect her, and she'll wonder about you, and one thing is bound to result—a possible friendship spoiled!

It's always easy to say there are rules for this and rules for that, but in the matter of confidences and how to keep away from them, I've found a few do's and don'ts that are quite workable:

- Do be friendly with everyone with whom you work.
- Don't get into cliques, with one group vying against the other, so that you're forced to take sides or be in the middle.
- Do avoid twosomes. Since the only chance for confidences is when you're alone with someone else, protect both of you from that impulse by surrounding yourselves with other people.
- Do use conduct rules with women that you'd use with men. You wouldn't date a man a few times and start dragging out the family skeletons, or brag so unbecomingly that he'd lose interest rapidly, would you?
- Do maintain a sense of humor. If a confidence does slip out, make it an interesting yarn, so that the person who hears it will forget the story's about you, and will remember only the way in which it was told.
- Don't allow yourself a lot of spare time. Fill in your extra-curricular activities with USO, Red Cross or other activities that will keep you too busy for confidences.
- Do write out your confidences or problems—then tear them up and throw them away. You'll find out that what you really needed was the chance to express yourself—much more than someone to express yourself to!
- And if these rules don't work, you're not hopeless—but everyone will think you are . . . Confidentially!

THE END



Bonita Granville extends life of lipstick



Woe Margaret O'Brien lengthens dresses with ruffles



Kathryn Grayson baby-oils back and arms



Jennifer Jones magics vegetable waters



Irene Dunne protects metal compact case



Ginger Rogers has unique way to save perfume



Ingrid Bergman uses Continental method with foods

BY CATHERINE ROBERTS
FASHION COUNSELOR

YES, even the Hollywood stars practice pet economies, despite their upper bracket earnings. For saving things today is not a matter of money. The traditional Yankee thrift is no longer material for jokes but a seriously considered and practiced method of living. It's fun, too, when imagination and ingenuity enter the picture, and are these Hollywood girls ingenious!

Bonita Granville discovered that there's a generous quarter inch of lipstick left in container after stick has been worn down so that it can't be applied to lips. Before inserting a refill Bonita uses up every last bit by means of a lipbrush. She sometimes digs out this residue and transfers it to a tiny pill box. Irene Dunne got an idea from the slip case her compact was in. Usually these slip cases, practical as they may be, are unattractive looking. Using hers as a pattern she cut out several others from scraps of velvet, wool, gingham. Now her precious metal case is protected from scratches and she has an amusing and practical matching note for each of her dresses.

Lovely and natural-looking Ingrid Bergman didn't have to acquire any new habits of thrift. Her Scandinavian background saw to that! She lives simply and unassumingly with her husband and adorable little girl and has many excellent and definite ideas about conservation and saving. Not a scrap of food is wasted in her household. Left-over vegetables and meats turn up the second or third day as tasty stews served continental fashion in clay casseroles. To give a new and "just made" look to the dish Ingrid pops in a package of frozen peas and carrots about ten minutes before serving time. They add color and drama. Joan Bennett has a similar interest in food conservation and stretching. She reserves almost perfect spheres of the lowly potato for baking and boiling, keeping the odd-shaped, scarred or split ones for her own private potato pancake recipe. You may have this recipe by writing to me. Joan's a good cook, and her famous potato pancakes . . . yum! Fashion and beauty tricks of considerable merit have evolved through experimentation or from memories. Gail Russell reverted to childhood days [Please turn to page 72]



Gail Russell achieves natural curls easily

How Hollywood Saves It... Smartly

Take Your Beauty Problems to a Doctor

Continued from page 13

Diet rarely cures acne, but some foods make it worse. Chocolate is a special offender. Mild cases are usually benefited by avoiding highly-spiced and seasoned foods, and greasy fried foods. Liberal consumption of green vegetables and fruits aids the eliminative system. In stubborn cases of acne, X-ray treatments may be necessary, and massive doses of Vitamin D are sometimes prescribed. Naturally these methods must be carefully supervised by a physician.

Quite the opposite of acne is a condition of excessively dry skin. A young social worker with such a skin was astonished when her doctor told her she took too many baths!

"Use cleansing creams as much as possible," he advised her, "and change the soap you are using for a superfatted variety. Water irritates your skin."

ECZEMA is an inclusive word covering various skin troubles. The skin may be red and inflamed, with scaly patches or moist eruptions which encrust as they dry. Such skins, like excessively dry ones, are irritated by water. Often a starch bath is recommended. Take half a cupful of laundry starch, boil it up in two or three quarts of water as you would for clothes, and add it to the tub bath. The milky water will then be bland and non-irritating. What is good for one skin, therefore, may be the worst possible for another. That is one way in which your doctor can help you, perhaps solve a skin problem you have been making worse without knowing it.

An individual type of skin is the kind that yields a freckle crop. Freckles are not necessarily a beauty hazard—ask Myrna Loy! Often they contribute to an appearance of youthful pertness. But they do mark the owner as possessing a skin which for some reason lacks the ability to mobilize pigment into a smooth tan. It has a delicate charm all its own. Occasionally freckles can be bleached to some degree by rubbing lemon on the skin. The best method, however, is prevention. Avoid strong sunlight, wear wide-brimmed hats and be moderate about sunbaths. Pastes which promise to peel the freckles off are hazardous and should be used only if the doctor so advises.

A completely beautiful skin is not the answer to all beauty problems. I have a vivid memory of a

young secretary who for months took my dictation. Her manner of looking at me was disconcerting—through narrowed eyelids, as if she were permanently angry. She drooped round-shouldered over her notebook like a pothook, her nose a few inches from the page. I ventured to inquire about her eyes.

"Oh, yes, I'm nearsighted," she answered brightly. "But I'm taking corrective exercises."

One day some months later she appeared at work wearing glasses. She no longer squinted angrily at me; her eyes were rested and her posture was better. Her oculist had cured a beauty problem of which I suppose she was quite unaware. She had discovered that eye "exercises" had been futile for her particular condition.

It is no doubt natural for women to dislike spectacles, remembering Dorothy Parker's famous line that "men seldom make passes at girls who wear glasses." At times, however, they pay for it by even greater beauty sacrifices. No woman really deludes herself that crow's feet are glamorous, nor the multitudinous wrinkles from constant squinting, the strained and haggard expression, the miserable headaches. Newer types of glasses are designed to flatter the face. The secretary I mentioned married a naval ensign after the burst forth in her new specs, not before. If you don't need glasses your oculist will so inform you; perhaps they are required only for close work. There are also invisible lenses, worn in contact with the eyeball so nobody suspects them. A famous nearsighted actress, who in all her life had never seen her audience as anything but a formless blur, was fitted with contact lenses and had a bad attack of stage fright when she first saw her audience as people!

Many beauty problems begin with the feet. They are the foundation of poise and clean-limbed grace. Watch the parade of women on a city street and observe how many teeter precariously on pointed heels—yes, how many waddle! And how many lines of tension, faces marked by chronic discomfort, could be beautified by help from a foot specialist. A casual self-selection of various types of "doctor" shoes may do more harm than good; usually what aching feet require is not artificial support but a chance to use their muscles. Corns, calluses and ugly bunions arise from ill-fitting shoes and nothing else. To make the most of your precious shoe coupons, choose your new pair carefully. Generally they should have a straight inner border with plenty of toe room.

Try this "walk test": Do your toes point straight ahead, even a little inward? That's fine; toeing out makes one waddle and frequently is a sign of flat feet or weakened muscles. Is it painful for you to walk barefoot or in low heels? You have probably been wearing high heels so long that the muscles in the back of your legs have become shortened. Are the inside margins of your shoe soles worn more

than the outside? Better get professional help in correcting your stance and making you foot-happy!

I shall never forget one young woman who was frankly considered queer by her fellow workers. She consistently wore dresses longer than fashion decreed, and thick heavy stockings. I had been working with a physician on an article about varicose veins, and I was surprised when the young woman asked me timidly if she could read the proofs. It developed, as you have guessed, that her queerness was merely an effort to conceal the ropy blue varicose veins that made her legs ugly. A few weeks' treatment solved her beauty problem so completely that she blossomed out in a brand new wardrobe that ended just short of her knees! Her doctor used the injection treatment. In his office, at periodic intervals, a solution was injected into the ugly veins which eventually obliterated them.

Women who must stand much at their work, such as salesgirls, are especially subject to this beauty hazard. The blood tends to stagnate, the tiny valves in the veins to disappear so that pressure causes unsightly bulging. Walking about occasionally, or flexing the knees by placing the feet alternately on a stool or shelf, are valuable preventives if you have a standing job.

Superfluous hair, moles and birthmarks are blemishes that need not always be endured if you take your beauty problems to your doctor. Permanent removal of superfluous hair is accomplished by the electric needle in the hands of a skilled operator. It is somewhat tedious, mildly painful, but the hair is gone forever. Abrasives such as pumice stone, contained in handy pads, can be used to rub down fine hairs. Dark hair can be made inconspicuous by bleaching with a hydrogen peroxide solution to which a few drops of ammonia water have been added.

Moles are merely a form of birthmark, though they may not be present at birth. An ordinary brown mole, if strategically located, can be glorified as a beauty spot, but its removal by methods such as the electric needle is not complicated. Blue moles should be regarded with a special respect because of the possibility that they may become malignant. A mole which is constantly irritated, as by friction with clothing, is best removed. Never pluck at it, apply pastes, or tamper with it yourself—the best skin specialist in your city is none too good for this seemingly simple job.

MUCH can be done, too, in effacing birthmarks, which because of greater areas of feminine exposure are more of a problem for women than for men. A good deal depends upon the type and location of the birthmark, but doctors have numerous effective methods of attack which often achieve startlingly effective results. X-rays in skilled hands can remove some birthmarks. Another method is the appli-

cation of carbon dioxide snow—dry ice in powdered form. The electric needle can also obliterate certain types of blemishes. Opaque cosmetics of special composition can cover facial birthmarks and render them invisible. And there is always recourse to plastic surgery in the case of birthmarks and graver disfigurements. Some of the "before and after" pictures published in surgical journals are truly astonishing. Here is a girl, her nose horribly mutilated in an automobile accident, who has acquired a new proboscis like Hedy Lamarr's. Here is another with a brand new ear acquired through cartilage grafting, and another with a surgically uplifted bustline literally made to order for a sweater.

Plastic surgery is not to be undertaken lightly. It is an art calling for the highest degree of skill and is therefore expensive. The field attracts some dubious operators who prey upon the desperation of women, and it is wise to inquire of your county medical society for the names of reputable specialists, dermatologists or plastic surgeons. One type of operation no longer done is the injection of paraffin to remove wrinkles. There comes to mind the case of a middle-aged woman whose appearance was temporarily improved by such injections, but later the paraffin consolidated under the skin and formed disfiguring tumors of a frightful purplish cast.

Face-lifting operations involve the stretching of sagging skins to "straighten out" wrinkles and triple chins. Results are not always permanent and repeated operations may be necessary. One woman's face was "lifted" so high that she was unable to smile, the skin being taut and mask-like. But skilled plastic surgery can perform many miracles and new lessons are now being learned in the

repair of soldiers mutilated in warfare. A recent invention, the dermatome, enables the surgeon to pare off large, even sections of skin from one portion of the body to be grafted onto another, eliminating the numerous small scars unavoidable when small patches are joined together. Reconstruction of noses and uplifting of pendulous breasts, though far from trivial, are among the simplest and most satisfactory of plastic procedures.

THE most common beauty problem of all is unquestionably the matter of weight—too much or too little. I have on my desk a letter from an overweight woman commenting on a book in which I summarized the latest findings of nutrition authorities on the ever fascinating subject of food and the body.

"I spend morning after morning playing furious games of tennis," she writes. "I take steam baths until I am boiled down to the bone. My scales always show a gratifying loss, but the next morning I am right back where I started."

This is quite to be expected, for what she is losing is water, not fat, and the water is speedily replaced. Valuable though it is an accessory, exercise is a minor factor in reducing—in fact, it sharpens the appetite. You would have to walk 45 minutes to burn up the extra calories provided by two Brazil nuts!

The truth is that nothing makes fat except food. The mildly plumpish woman can reduce her weight safely merely by taking a little less than her usual portions, avoiding particularly those concentrated sources of calories—fats, sugars, cream, cakes, nuts, alcohol (the latter contains more calories per gram than carbohydrates!).

On the other hand, many girls slim

themselves down beyond reason and pay for it with sagging skins and loss of energy. A reasonable number of pleasing convexities is a badge of femininity. A fat cushion removed too abruptly from beneath the skin knocks the props from under it, leaves it with no place to go so that it folds upon itself like an accordion. The underweight woman needs more of the very foods her obese sister must avoid.

But remember always that you are a person peculiar unto yourself. That is where the doctor comes in. He will give you a basal metabolism test which perhaps reveals that a sluggish thyroid contributes to your overweight. In that case he will prescribe thyroid substance. This is an effective thinner-downer, but it is also a powerful drug that positively requires a doctor's supervision. You may, on the contrary, have some physical condition that interferes with assimilation of food and keeps you underweight. For these reasons a doctor can prescribe a diet tailor-made to your needs—perhaps your unbecomingly pallid and pepleless result from a mild anemia, common among women because of periodic blood losses, and he'll build you up with anti-anemic capsules and stuff you with liver, green vegetables, peaches and apricots.

Or—simple miracle that it is!—he may tell you to go to bed earlier and get more rest. Haggardness, irritability, bags under the eyes and unglamorous hair-trigger dispositions are notoriously common among those who burn the candle at both ends. This is one case where you have it within your power to anticipate a doctor's beauty cure, with occasional exceptions for those days when the man in your life gets a furlough.

THE END

Enslaved

Continued from page 17

with more gin. All through that awful night I slept in snatches, woke crazy with despair, and drank from my bottle until I was able to pass out again. Pounding away in the back of my mind was the refrain, "You're mad! You're mad!" And the only way I could stop hearing it was to drink some more.

Two months later I landed in a mental hospital and started a slow fight back to normal. Did I make it? I did. And this is the story of how I did it. I did it by joining up with one of the most remarkable secret societies in the whole world—an underground railway that delivers alcoholics from

their slavery to John Barleycorn.

I was an active drinking member of the dizzy post-war jazz generation of flask-toting adolescents who rebelled against conventional standards through the Prohibition-ridden 1920s. Scott Fitzgerald wrote us up. You'll find my mirror-image in many of his pages.

Through most of my adolescent years I was a heavy drinker. Mostly it was drinking from the flasks of the boys I went with. I could carry incredible amounts and never show it.

The boys I drank with regarded my ability to hold liquor with wonder and respect. I thought that was the reason I drank—to be popular.

But the real reason was quite different. The real reason was that I was a sensitively organized youngster who, as a child, had been bookish, seclusive, and timid. I was still shy, retiring, and ill at ease with people. With a few drinks, I found, I was over all that as if by magic. Liquor put me on my toes, made me bold and talkative; in that condition I quickly be-

came the sort of girl who gets her man.

The boys loved it. Here was one girl who didn't hold back when the flask was passed around.

Another factor in the situation was that my father, who was very rich, would never give me an allowance. He wanted to run me as he ran other people, and made me come to him for every dollar I wanted. And when I asked, he gave. If I asked for \$10 he might give me \$100; or if for \$100 I might get \$1,000.

But I wasn't happy. I wanted to get out and do something that would rid me of my feeling of inferiority, from which drinking was providing a phony escape. So I saved my money and secretly enrolled for a secretarial course in a business school, knowing Dad would never approve.

What gave me away was that during the social season, through November, December, and January, I was getting up early in order to get to the business school by 9 o'clock, whereas it had been my habit to sleep till noon. So Dad quietly investigated

and found out just what I was up to.

He didn't say a word about it. He simply proposed a trip to Europe, on the ground that having just retired from business he wanted a holiday. I was to take along two friends as my guests. It was to be a gaudy party—the sort of thing almost any girl would be starry-eyed about. Of course I fell for it, and the secretarial course went glimmering.

We traveled like a royal family. It satisfied Dad's egotism. Showy living is often a part of the alcoholic psychology; and Dad was an alcoholic, though I didn't realize it then.

When we came back home after a year, I was as arrogant, self-willed, purse-proud, and fond of seeing how much liquor I could carry as ever. One of the first things I did on my return was elope with a boy of whom my family thoroughly disapproved.

Bob was more than just a heavy drinker—he was a hopeless alcoholic. There is a difference. Lots of heavy drinkers can stop drinking if they want to, whereas the genuine alcoholic can't stop from choice. Once he starts he must keep on; and once he stops he must eventually start again, in a week, a month, a year. Thus alcoholics, as distinct from heavy drinkers, are a peculiar group, with a peculiar malady. They are hypersensitive to alcohol, "allergic" to it; and yet they are impelled to drink it. They are as definitely ill as if they had cancer or paranoia or dementia praecox.

Of course I knew nothing of these distinctions then. What brought about a rift between Bob and me was not that he drank, but that he couldn't hold his liquor the way I could. I had the greatest contempt for him because he couldn't keep up with me; and I tried to get him to stop drinking altogether, implying that liquor was for he-men, who could hit my pace or better it.

That mortally wounded his pride. We were both headstrong and unyielding. The situation grew more and more difficult. Then I had a baby, and lost it; and finally my parents came and brought me home. A little later I got a divorce.

Soon after that Dad lost his fortune—nothing left—and I had to go to work. I got an editorial job on an art magazine; and then took the notion that I wanted to go to Europe where I could be free and independent and do exactly as I liked. Incidentally, I was going to write the Great American Novel. Alcoholics are that way. You are sure you can jump over the moon—and when you find you can't the letdown is correspondingly severe. And so you have to have a drink.

The novel flopped. Out of money, I went into photography and ran a studio successfully for seven years.

When I had been in Europe two years the liquor began to really get me. I wasn't just a heavy drinker any longer—I was an alcoholic. Some persons become alcoholics from the time they first began to drink. With

others it may take as many as ten or fifteen years. It had taken me about five. There were certain clear signs which showed I was over the line—if I had interpreted them rightly. For instance, alcohol had formerly had no severe after-effects on me that a little aspirin, bicarbonate of soda, and milk of magnesia wouldn't take care of. But now it was quite different. I would have terrific hangovers; and perhaps the most distressing symptom was a nervousness so agonizing I can't describe the torture of it. And nothing would stop it but another drink. And when the anesthesia of that drink wore off, another drink—and so on without end. You can't stop. You're an addict. The thing grows by what it feeds on.

I completely misinterpreted what was happening to me. I thought it was a "nervous breakdown," and that that, rather than liquor, was what was making the trouble. When the doctors told me it was the liquor, and that I must stop drinking, I didn't believe them. But now I was frightened when I found I couldn't stop when I tried.

I still retained my ability to drink without showing any outward signs of it. My manners, my speech, my gait, were always under control. Many people who knew me well never guessed it, even when I was drunk in their presence. I took great pride in this—and anybody who dared to tell me I was drinking too much was no longer my friend; for drink had become, for me, the most important thing in the world. Moreover, my pride wouldn't let me be with drinkers without drinking myself. I wanted to be a part of the normal world—which, to me, was a drinking world. And besides, I still kidded myself with the notion that I could stop any time I wanted to.

One night, while with some friends, I passed out and pitched head first down a flight of stairs. They brought me to with a drink, and thought what ailed me was the concussion. So did I. It gave me an alibi. The same thing happened other times.

INEVITABLY the alcoholic point of view which had made me contemptuous toward my husband because he couldn't keep pace with my drinking, still dominated my attitude toward all the men I met. I was suspicious of the goody-goodies who didn't drink, or—if they drank—didn't keep up with me. I was hostile toward them too, interpreting their abstinence or their moderation as a reproof, an implied criticism of me. They were namby-pambies, Nice Nellies, boy scouts—out of their depth when they tried to associate with a woman of the world like me.

In other words, I gravitated to the men who were hard drinkers, with the uninhibited standards of conduct which are likely to go with hard drinking. Alcohol let the bars down on both sides.

Whenever my friends tried to steer me toward some other type of man, I

froze him out—judging him always by the way he drank. The result was that many men whom I would normally have found congenial and delightful, fell away. But I didn't realize that it was I who had repelled and alienated them, and that such men didn't care for drunken women. So, when they dropped out of my life, one by one, I acquired a "nobody loves me" attitude. And I told myself I didn't care—shrugged it off. The grapes were sour.

Those men who remained my drinking companions, on the other hand, knew exactly what they wanted from a pretty woman who could hold her liquor, and who evidently knew her way around. Drugged, relaxed, pliant from alcohol, she seemed to have an invitation in her eyes—to be saying, "You know me, Al." And there was a leering answer in their eyes.

And so I was torn between two desires—the wish for friendship with men whose conversation was interesting, stimulating, on the one hand, and on the other hand, a degrading, questionable association with men who were my equals at the bar.

Their eternal essays at low-level, alcoholic flirtation, to use the mildest possible word for their constant importunities, would thrill and intrigue me at the time, and sicken me later when I thought about them.

And so I hated them all—the men who should have been my friends and weren't; and the men who were openly eager to come as far as I would let them, by the alcoholic route, and whom I still had the sanity to hold at a distance. Yes, I hated them all—and myself besides.

It was about this time when I noticed a new and frightening effect from the alcohol. I could no longer remember what I had said and done while drunk. Formerly this had never happened. Now it became more and more common. Sometimes I would remember everything, but another time, on the same amount of liquor, I would go completely blotto and wake up later without remembering a thing. And yet the people I was with might not even know I was drunk.

I got the notion that if I could go to the country I could stop drinking—a common alcoholic delusion. So I sold my photographic business and undertook the management of a country hotel owned by two wealthy friends of mine who wanted someone in charge they thought they could trust.

I ran it competently through the day, but I went on getting drunk every night just the same. And at last I had to quit that job.

I got a job selling photographs on commission; but I was so nervous and jittery I couldn't work. Instead, I parked myself and my portfolio in Second and Third Avenue saloons, where I cadged drinks from any men I could scrape an acquaintance with. That was easy enough. I was still pretty. And most men will buy a girl a drink.

This was a repetition, on a somewhat lower level, of the sort of as-

sociation I had had with men in Europe. Many of them mistakenly thought those drinks were a preliminary to a romantic adventure of some kind. That was why they were willing to go down into their pockets to pay for those drinks. It was a sordid trick to play on them, but I was utterly cynical about it. For I had to drink, and I had no money.

There were some, of course, who felt themselves sufficiently repaid if, for the price of a drink or two, they could sit at a table and chat with an attractive woman who certainly gave no evidence of being drunk.

I REMAINED that way, virtually a bum, living on my sister, cagging drinks, borrowing, imposing on my friends, from January till October, 1937. I made several unsuccessful efforts to get admitted to a private mental hospital as a free patient, since I had no money; and yet when someone suggested that I apply for admission to a State Hospital the idea shocked me.

Mind you—most of this went on behind the scenes. To the outside world I continued to put up a front. To the casual observer I was still a smooth, sophisticated, slightly cynical woman of the world. I dressed well, went to social functions, played around with my monied friends. It was then I had the experience with "Dorothy," which I related at the beginning of this article. That experience thoroughly frightened me, because I realized that in that alcoholic trance that had brought me to the apartment of a girl I'd never seen before, I might have hooked up with almost anybody, that almost anything might have happened to me.

Every minute of that awful night, when I got back from "Dorothy" to my sister's apartment, is graven on my memory. Whenever I came to I would cast longing glances at the window from which I didn't have the nerve to jump. Or was it that I still clung to the hope that there was some other way out?

It was about two months after that that a friend made me a Christmas present of the price of a one hour consultation with a noted New York neurologist, who took a special interest in my case, and arranged for me to go to the neurological ward in Bellevue Hospital. After I had been there for five months under his care, he arranged for my admission to a mental hospital. I felt now that I would have a chance, and I fully intended to cooperate. I realize that if this failed, I was probably done for.

But once there I became resentful. How could these doctors understand me? They weren't alcoholics. They didn't know what it meant to need a drink. They couldn't talk my language. In spite of their watchfulness, I managed time and again to get hold of liquor—always telling myself that this was just to buck me up so I could abstain in the future. Alcoholics always find ways to rationalize their

HOW TO READ HANDS

BY MARCELLA MARCH



THERE'S a story in every woman's hand—revealing her character—hinting at her future. And it doesn't take a gypsy fortune-teller to read it. Any intelligent observer can tell quite a bit about you by glancing at your hand, and that observer might well be the very person whose good opinion you most value. What does your hand reveal about you? Here are the hand give-aways and the story they tell:

SMOOTH-TEXTURED SKIN: You're feminine and fastidious—and you value your appearance highly enough to keep a bottle of hand-lotion available in your bathroom, desk drawer, or factory locker. Someone likes—or will like—to hold that hand.

VERY LONG FINGERNAILS: You work at being attractive, but you're inclined to be a little bit vain. All very well—but could you keep your fingernails quite that long if you did your share in the war effort? It might be well to mention the war work you're doing to that new man, because you're under suspicion of shirking.

RAGGED CUTICLE: You're inclined to be careless, neglectful of detail. You might be the sort of girl who fastens shoulder straps with safety pins. Cuticle remover and orange sticks are put up in ten-cent packages. You can take a hint, can't you?

BROKEN NAILS: You're conscientious about doing your share on the home front. But you aren't quite as conscientious about your own health and appearance, and your romance may suffer as a result. A quart of milk a day will give your body that calcium that your broken nails indicate is lacking. You're probably the type who could use vitamin pills to advantage, too.

CHIPPED NAIL POLISH: You start things but don't finish them. You probably attract people with that new manicure but lose their interest along with your nail polish. You think you can get by with things that no girl can get by with—things that add up to poor grooming. Patch up your chipped polish—or remove it entirely.

NICOTINE STAINS: You're the "good pal" type whom men treat with friendly camaraderie, but somehow, romance has eluded you. Your nicotine-stained fingers destroy your feminine daintiness. Rub them with pumice—available in variety stores—and bleach them with peroxide. Then watch for that dark man to come into your life.

NAILS NEAT, BUT LUSTERLESS: You're probably doing a good job in the kind of war work that doesn't permit you to maintain a manicure. Be careful that your enthusiasm for work doesn't overshadow your desire to attract. Here's a secret! Colorless nail polish can be dabbed on in a hurry by the veriest amateur, and if it isn't exactly even, it won't show your hurry as a bright polish would. And your hands still look cared-for!

drinking, make it seem reasonable.

And then would come remorse, and finally the hopeless conviction that I was in the grip of something stronger than myself. Complete despair at last.

Then one day—a day that was to be the turning point for me, if I had but known it—my doctor handed me a book, entitled *Alcoholics Anonymous*, with the remark, "I have known people to be cured of alcoholism merely by reading this book. Read it—and if you like I'll put you in touch with the man who wrote it."

"Who is he?" I asked suspiciously. "He's anonymous—but his name is Bill," he said with a cryptic smile. "Anyhow, read it."

It proved to be a big, convincing, disturbing sort of book—and it spoke with authority because it had been written by an alcoholic, and was full

of the testimony of people who talked the language of alcoholism, and who plainly knew what it was all about. But I didn't like it. The book told me I was licked and helpless—and I didn't like that. It told me to stop depending on my own will, admit my helplessness, and let somebody else, bigger and stronger than I was—bigger and stronger than alcohol, take over. And what do you suppose that Somebody Else was? Why—God! No less!

I had never been religious, and I felt I'd been tricked into a false hope, only to be let down. It made me furious—this "God stuff," as I called it. I hurled the book into a corner. So that was the idea, was it! Get religion? Me, an intellectual, a rationalist?

"Listen," I said to my doctor, "if you think I could go for religion, you're crazy. I couldn't accept an

emotional solution to my problem, not in a thousand years."

"I'm not religious myself," he said quietly, "but I'm telling you, as a scientific man and as a psychiatrist, that religion of some sort is the only known cure for genuine alcoholism. So you'd better keep an open mind—if you want to pull out of this."

"I've got to be intellectually honest," I stormed. "I can't pretend to believe something I don't believe. I can't kid myself, and I won't."

"You do that every time you take a drink," he said. "Go on and finish the book."

So I read some more. I found it persuasive. I found it didn't demand that I go orthodox. It put it something like this: "You'll admit that there is something or other in the universe that is bigger and stronger and better than you are, won't you?" I thought that seemed reasonable. "All right," said the book: "That's all that's necessary. Call that Power by any name you like—Truth, Reality, Nature, the Universal Consciousness, Science—what you will. Some find it simpler to call it God—but suit yourself about that."

So I read on, with growing interest, growing excitement. Could this be it? I began to hope. I think maybe the book would eventually have gotten me anyway, by coaxing me along. But just then something happened that tipped the scale suddenly and decisively.

One day I was pacing up and down my room in a terrible rage because a certain person was perpetrating a wrong on my sister and on me, and I had to stand by, helpless, and see it happen. I can't go into that here. Suffice it to say that I was furious. I could have murdered that person. I wanted to. Then, in my frenzy, my mind sought the usual escape. I told myself I'd get hold of some liquor somehow and get drunk. I'd show them!

I paced the room as if I were crazy. I struck at objects in my way, turned over chairs, hurled an ashtray against the wall. And one of the things I struck at was that copy of *Alcoholics Anonymous* lying there on my bed. But instead of flying off onto the floor, the book simply flipped open; and then, as I stood breathing hard and glaring down at it, there seemed to jump out at me in letters of fire from the middle of the page, *We cannot live with anger.*

It hit me right between the eyes. Coincidence? Okay, coincidence! I don't care what you call it, any more than I care what you call God. All I know is that I passed out. I don't remember anything more till I came to an hour later, on my knees beside that bed, my hands clutching the book, the bed sheets wet from my tears, and I—why I felt as if I had died and waked up in heaven! I was so happy, so lifted up, so jubilant, so completely confident about the future, so secure and safe in the hands of a beneficent Power that was all about me, that it was as if

I had taken on a new personality. I felt that I wanted to walk out the window and keep on walking, and that if I did I would not fall.

It may sound ridiculous to many readers, but I have to add that my feelings about that moment in my life are still so intense, that I believe that, in that tremendous instant, I had reached such a height that I could have done it. I don't ask anybody to believe it. I simply say that that's the way I feel about it. It is perhaps the best illustration of the force with which this thing hit me. The ghosts and shadows that had hemmed me in seemed to vanish. I knew I wasn't trapped any longer—that I was free from slavery. I knew I didn't want a drink or to get even with anybody or to forget anything. I was free from anger and fear; I was free to love and be happy! So this was religion—this Freedom! This was what some called God!

Then I was frightened, wondering if I hadn't simply gone out of my mind. In alarm I went to my doctor and told him what had happened. He smiled, and handed me a copy of William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*.

"James wasn't 'religious,'" he said, "but he collected a number of such experiences as yours, and would probably have included yours if he had known of it. You seem to have experienced an authentic conversion. Read this book—and don't worry that you've gone crazy. Maybe you've gone sane. The world could stand a lot of that sort of craziness. And now I think it's time you met Bill—and the rest of the *Alcoholics Anonymous*."

SO I went over to Brooklyn. That sounds simple—but for me it wasn't. Who were these queer people I was going to meet? Were they a collection of freaks and bums? I had always been afraid of strangers—and now there would be no liquor to put me at my ease. Odd, I thought, that having once lost myself in Brooklyn, I was now trying to find myself there.

I went ahead—came finally to a plain-looking house in a row of plain-looking houses, a few blocks from the subway station, and forced my hand to the bell. The door opened, and there stood a tall, lanky man with a lean face and keen, kindly eyes, and a quizzical smile, who took my hand and greeted me as if he had always known I'd be along sometime, and here I was at last.

It was Bill, of course—Bill, who had written that book. Only he didn't write it—he dictated it, pouring it out to a stenographer with hardly need to change a paragraph of it, so straightly and authentically did it come from his heart. And he put into it a quality of insight that you feel in every page. It came out of the hot fires of an immediate experience. I suppose that explains why it had hit me where I lived—me, and many, many others.

When Bill took me into that room,

I found myself, for the first time in my life, it seemed, among people who understood me.

They had all been through hell, but you'd never have guessed it to look at them or to hear their talk and their laughter. Something had happened to them. The very air seemed electric, as if everybody there were living through a great adventure. The men, without exception, were alcoholics, and some of the women. They had come there for a weekly get-together. Most of the men had brought their wives and some even their children. Those wives had all stood by their men, and now, in this hour of their triumph they seemed to me the happiest group of women I had ever seen.

Scattered here and there among them were newcomers, like me, brought there by friends, or introduced to Bill by their doctors, like me. One was a young man just out of a mental hospital. His father had brought him. Later he went upstairs with Bill and a few other men—men who had faced the same problem, and had found the answer, and could talk to him in a way that would be impossible for any non-alcoholic.

Another was the principal of a private school a hundred miles away. His wife told me that for years he had been doing his work competently through the day, getting drunk at night, sleeping it off, getting up in the morning to go through the same old round. Nobody but she knew it, least of all the people connected with the school. And now—"This is the answer," she said exultantly. "We heard about it through a friend. We come to these meetings every Tuesday night. It keeps us in line. Everybody helps everybody else. John helps work with other alcoholics. Helping others, keeping others straight, is part of the cure. Somehow the things that used to make him drink have vanished out of our lives. The same thing will happen to you," she finished with a conviction that thrilled me.

Of course I already knew Bill's story. It is told in the book. He had been a successful Wall Street operator, tremendously ambitious to be rich and powerful. It was an exhilarating life, and drink formed an important part of the picture. He drank with business friends for the sake of business, and with others for fun. He enjoyed the night life of New York. He was convivial, brilliant, well liked. And he had a charming wife.

The depression wiped him out. Some of his friends were jumping from high windows; but Bill simply went out and got drunk. After that he made a temporary comeback—but suddenly he found he couldn't stop drinking. By insensible degrees, he had become an alcoholic in the days of his prosperity. Now he was hooked. He lost job after job.

One day as Bill sat drinking in the kitchen, a friend called on him. This man was an alcoholic too. But he had changed. He had stopped drinking. He explained to Bill that he had "got

religion," and that it worked. Bill looked at him in disgust. But his friend said, "Man, you believe in some sort of God, don't you—some Spirit of the Universe? You don't have to 'get religion' if you don't want to. Why don't you just choose your own conception of God? Some Power greater than you are. That'll give you plenty of latitude, and it'll be a start. Then all you've got to do is admit you can't pull out on your own, and put yourself in the hands of the Power I call God but which you can call whatever you like. That'll bring you through, just as it did me. It's the only thing that will."

So that was how Bill got started. It worked. And he was so excited over what had happened to him that he went right around to the hospital where they had treated him, and passed his idea along to some of the patients there. And then he thought of the thousands of hopeless alcoholics who needed help and would die or go insane if he couldn't reach them.

And so it was that Bill and his wife, with no money, but with their hearts on fire with the thing they had found, turned to the new work. Bill was tempted at times to go back to drinking, but he found that the thing that would always hold him straight was to work on another alcoholic. He couldn't do that and picture himself drinking. What it seemed to create in his mind was the picture of himself not drinking. It was a marvelously simple way of keeping himself straight. For of course what it meant was that he wasn't thinking about himself anymore; which is important, because one outstanding thing about the alcoholic is that he is egocentric, always watching himself, always thinking of himself.

Bill gradually formed groups among his friends, many of them high-salaried executives on their way downhill. It was a desperate struggle financially.

He and his wife turned their home into a center where the group could meet and take counsel and support each other. If any member of the group felt himself slipping, he could telephone other members and they would rush to him at once and stay with him till he was all right again—bucking him up, renewing his courage, renewing that faith in God which was the underpinning of the whole structure they were raising. And in working with him, they strengthened themselves.

Among the people I met there that night and later, I found every variety of religious opinion and approach. It was an atmosphere in which a Christian, a Jew, an agnostic, an atheist, a Buddhist, a Mohammedan, could have felt at ease. It was deeply, fundamentally spiritual.

It does not worry Bill when a newcomer shies off from the "God stuff." Bill just smiles and says quietly, "Don't worry about that. Just come on in and do the best you can. Forget yourself. Join in our work of salvag-

ing other alcoholics. You can't drink while you are fighting to keep another man from drinking. As for religion, helping others is it. Religion isn't a theological formula, it's a way of life. Every man has to find God in his own fashion. You will. Don't worry."

And what happens is that those who come in on those terms presently experience a slow change, deep down inside them. The thing that happened to me so suddenly comes to most of them more gradually.

IT IS a unique institution, that underground for alcoholics. It sneaks you out and over the border. Helping hands reach out to your groping ones in the encircling gloom; they lead you on from station to station; and pretty soon you find you are a part of that underground yourself, helping other fugitives in their escape.

By the time you reach that stage you are so immune that, like me, you can sit up through the night, if need be, with some poor devil to keep him from jumping out the window in his frenzy; doling out enough liquor, maybe, to steady him and tide him over and keep him from going out of his mind. You can smell the liquor, and hear the clink of the bottle against the glass; listen to the stuff gurgle; see it glitter golden in the light, and yet never touch it or even want to touch it.

Well, that's what happened to me. Today I'm a member of a good-sized army. There are some 8,000 of us already—grown to that in five years—scattered mostly in groups, 200 of them, throughout the United States and Canada; and we are growing by the scores every day.

Nobody knows who we are. You may be with one or another of us,

unaware that you are rubbing elbows with a person who has come back from a world of the living dead, the alcoholic world. We are anonymous, we work anonymously—and that's why we call ourselves Alcoholics Anonymous.

Our address and telephone number appear in no directory. The only way you can find us, unless some member gives you a private tip, is by way of the United States Post Office. You write your SOS, and you address it to: *Alcoholics Anonymous, Box 658, Church Street Annex Post Office, New York City.*

Later, your letter is read confidentially in a small office in downtown New York. There is no name on the door of that office. The person who reads it first is likely to be a woman who, before she found Alcoholics Anonymous, had been confined in mental hospitals fifteen times in three years, as a case of alcoholic insanity. There isn't anything you, or any other alcoholic, can say about drinking that she and her associates can't raise the ante on. They have been there and back. Everybody connected with the place is an alcoholic who has come back.

Presently you get a reply in a plain envelope that's as confidential as your inquiry. And then, if you really want to get away from the slavery you are living in, things will open up for you.

Nobody tries to high-pressure you or pull you in. You are simply told what it's all about, and you can take it or leave it. Some take it at once; others shy off at first, try going their own gait a while longer, finally admit they are licked, and join up. And some, of course, just keep on drinking.

And the results? Well, of those who really want to quit drinking, about

PRINCESS KROPOTKIN COMES TO LIFE STORY

WE WELCOME to LIFE STORY the fascinating Princess Alexandra Kropotkin, world traveler and international connoisseur of living. Beginning with the June issue of LIFE STORY, she will tell you all about New York in her Girl About Town column. Princess Kropotkin's own life story reads like a novel. She has known seven countries, lived among wealthy aristocrats in fabulous cities, and suffered imprisonment and starvation alone in hostile places. Out of these diverse experiences has come her intense interest in people, irrespective of their status in life. She speaks four languages fluently, and in addition to formal education attended dramatic school and



studied commercial drawing. She has written for many American, English, Spanish and Latin American publications and acted as Berlin correspondent for several British newspapers.

Princess Kropotkin has been a citizen of this country a number

of years now and believes personal adventures in living have been of far more value to her than her academic learning.

We feel that the Princess's enthusiasm and vitality will charm you as she writes of the big and little things which go to make New York the most colorful and expansive mecca of the world today.

Watch for Princess Kropotkin's Girl About Town column in your June issue of LIFE STORY.

fifty per cent pull out of their slough at once and never slip back (I was in that class); twenty-five per cent do a certain amount of floundering, have a few relapses, try again, and finally find themselves in the clear; and another twenty-five per cent remain doubtful borderline cases that haven't much left to build on, but may or may not recover.

The first thing Bill and his associates do is break you down. They can talk a language you understand because they have traveled the road you are on; and believe me when it comes to convincing you that you can no longer help yourself, or manage your own life, they are good. It's a tough dose and it goes down hard, because every alcoholic clings frantically to the delusion that he can take it or let it alone, and that he is a normal person—which he isn't. It is absolutely necessary that he realistically accept, without any reservations whatever, the fact that he cannot drink at all, and that he is not as other men, but is a peculiar person with a peculiar malady. By the time they finish with you, you stand there spiritually naked and shivering and ready to reach out for God, whatever your name is for Him

—and hang on, because you know there just isn't any other source of help; and, moreover, you see all around you living demonstrations of what can happen to people who accept that help—because they were all just as badly off as you were.

All right, you give in. What next? Well, you have to eat crow. In other words, you make a list of all the people you have wronged or harmed or that you owe unpaid debts to, for instance, and you resolve to make all the amends in your power. You will go to these persons and lay the cards on the table and put yourself right with them. You will make direct amends when possible, except when to do so would injure others.

What makes this procedure necessary is that one thing that causes an alcoholic to turn to drink is the sense of guilt and inferiority which comes from the knowledge that he has wronged somebody else. So it is necessary that that slate be wiped clean, or as clean as possible.

But that isn't the whole of it. As a part of this house-cleaning, the new member takes another member into his confidence and makes a clean breast of everything that's on his conscience—a kind of lay confessional.

He gets rid of his load that way, and takes counsel with his confidant as to what he may reasonably do about it.

In addition, he keeps on taking stock of himself, admitting he is wrong when he is wrong, trying as well as he can to do better, putting himself in touch with and in tune with God to the best of his ability.

To those who draw back and say they can't go through with it, Bill and his associates say, "Don't let that stop you. We're not saints either. We just do our best, and it works, in spite of our failures."

Life has changed for me completely in the four years that have passed since I walked into that gathering in Bill's Brooklyn home. I have my health back, I have a job I like. And the work I do helping other alcoholics helps me keep my feet on the ground.

I think one of the most remarkable things about it is that no "will power" is involved—no strain—no gritting my teeth and saying "I won't take a drink." None of that—no struggles with temptation, no torture of unsatisfied longing, no reservations. I just unreservedly don't drink and don't want to drink. It's that simple.

THE END

My Husband is a Prisoner of the Japs

Continued from page 54

Valor had been awarded to him for his part in the Marine campaign in Nicaragua.

John wasn't the Hollywood type, and I liked that. His military training had really become a part of his nature. He was quiet, serious, and deeply sincere, with all the limitless depth and steadiness I had longed for.

When he asked me to marry him, my voice shook a little with the happiness I felt as I gave him my answer.

John's hands were so tense they hurt my shoulders. "Alice, are you sure of what you're saying? You can't stay in the movies, you know, if you marry me. I'll always be changing stations and shipping from one place to another and I'll want my wife to be with me."

"Of course I'll give up the movies," I said without a second's hesitation. "I'd rather be your wife, John, and be with you than become the biggest star in the world."

"Being a Marine's wife won't be easy," he warned.

"I'll travel with you and follow you to the ends of the earth, if necessary," I whispered softly. "And John, if ever there's a day I can't go with you, I'll

always love you and I'll be waiting for you to come back till the end of time."

Fortunately John and I knew nothing then of the horrors that were to come. John was worried only about whether I could stand the strain of traveling with him, of having no permanent home as he was assigned from post to post. He was worried only about whether I could be happy living on a marine gunner's salary.

John and I were married on April 13, 1937. Our wedding was lovely. My parents were there from Fontana with my brother Bob, and John's folks had come all the way from North Carolina to attend.

When I told the studio I was through with pictures, everyone said I was mad.

But being a sensation on the screen didn't interest me any more. I wanted to be a sensation only in the eyes of my husband. As soon as my contract ended, I walked out of Hollywood forever.

I HAVEN'T set foot in Hollywood since 1937. I have no desire in the world to go back. Since John went overseas I've had several studio offers, but I've turned every one of them down. On that blessed day when John is finally released and sent home I don't want to be tied down to a movie contract. I want to devote myself immediately and entirely to being his wife, because being John's wife means everything to me.

Marriage with John was wonderful—really perfect—from our wedding day on. He was such a devoted, loving husband. We had four wonderful

years together—four years of incredible happiness. And as John had predicted, we traveled all over the country.

John taught me how to shoot, and I became quite expert with a rifle, and .45 and .22 caliber pistols. For some years now I've been a member of the Rifle and Pistol Club of Burbank, Calif., and the San Diego Police Officers' Rifle and Pistol Club. But in those days, John and I used to shoot together. We entered a lot of civilian matches and we both won medals that I still cherish.

It was in July of 1941 that John was sent to the Philippines. Oddly, no wives or children were permitted to go along on this transfer; there was a strict ruling that dependents must stay home.

We spent John's last furlough with my family in Fontana. Many times I noticed that my husband seemed thoughtful and brooding, and I'd catch him looking at me as if he were trying to stamp every hair on my head, every movement of my body indelibly into his memory.

His strange attitude combined with the fact that war was raging in Europe and we wives were barred from the Philippine transfer worried me greatly. But every time I mentioned anything about it to John, he would either try to laugh me out of my fears or change the subject.

It wasn't until John kissed me good-bye at the train that he told me: "I have no official information at all, darling, so maybe this is a bad guess. But I feel certain in my own mind that Uncle Sam will be getting

into the war soon. And I have a good hunch that the Philippines may be involved."

"Oh, John!" I cried, clinging to him. "Then this may really be good-by for a long time!"

He kissed me again, hard. "I think so, honey. Let's just hope I'm wrong."

"John, I love you so much," I whispered.

"And I love you, Alice sweetheart," he said huskily. "Try not to worry about me. No matter what happens, Alice, I'll come back. I've got you to come back to, and that'll pull me through, no matter what."

He left me then, my eyes stinging with tears I wouldn't shed in front of him. I stood watching his broad form disappear through the train gates, waving my last farewells, trying desperately to look gay. Then, when there was no more hope of seeing him even fleetingly just once more, I stumbled out of the station, forcing every ounce of my will against the scalding tears that insisted on blinding my eyes.

My husband's "hunch" about war and the Philippines did come true—horribly true. Just a few months after John arrived in Manila, war poured down from the skies in a stream of blasting, tearing bombs that made a human holocaust of Pearl Harbor and the Philippines.

I nearly went crazy December 7. And through the endless days that followed, fear for John clogged around my heart, burned at my mind unceasingly. I scanned every line of every edition of every newspaper. I listened to all the news broadcasts on the air. But there was no word, and there was no way of getting word. I had to wait, as so many other women were waiting—the way so many women still wait—to learn what had happened to the man I love.

CHRISTMAS came—the first of many tragic Christmases for me. The Japs had begun to land forces on Luzon Island, of which Manila is the capital. On tiny Cavite Naval Base, a small Marine garrison fought air attacks valiantly. The situation in the Philippines was hopeless, but our boys hung on grimly, giving ground slowly and grudgingly to the overwhelming numbers of Japs.

On January 2, 1942, the men left at Cavite received a scant half-hour's notice to evacuate. The evacuation took place on schedule, but in that brief half-hour the men managed to wreck the naval base completely with frantic but effective effort.

When the Japanese got to Cavite just a short time later, the fires were completely out of control. The important naval base the Japs had wanted so much was a raging inferno that would eventually disintegrate into a useless mass of twisted, smoldering ruins.

I rejoiced over the Japs' fruitless victory when I read of it in the papers, yet all the while fear pounded in my brain with every quickened beat of

my heart. You see, a month's time had passed since Pearl Harbor, and still I had no information about John. With this evacuation of Cavite, my worry was strung even higher. If John had survived the Jap slaughters, had he been able to get away from Cavite? Had he been hurt perhaps in one of the fires? Had he—been burned to death in the flames?

Silence was my only answer—silence that stretched itself out through tormenting days and endless nights.

That is why, during that first waiting, my hair began to turn gray—actually gray. Mentally I felt a thousand years old, spent and exhausted, as though I'd lived in a lifetime of agony. And I could do nothing to make myself forget. I couldn't work—I couldn't concentrate on anything except John. I just sat around the house and brooded till my nerves were on raw edge.

One morning in early February I went to the mailbox, hoping against hope, as usual. No one else in the family would go to the box these days. If there were anything for me, they wanted me to be the first to see it.

This morning I went through the same routine going through the envelopes: Advertisements, mail for Mother, Dad—It couldn't be! It couldn't be! There was a letter for me!

I stood there holding it, staring at it. Dear God, it was from John!

His letter had been written January 17, 1942. It said:

Darling:

It's rather difficult to write when there is so little that can be written. However, this will at least tell you that I am still well and loving you as ever.

Thousands of things have happened—most of them you have read or heard about. They are all true enough and well remembered. I wish I could tell you everything, sweetheart, but you know without my telling you because we talked of what war was like many times, and you can let your imagination add a little to that and not be far off.

I have lost everything except a couple of changes of clothing, my toilet articles, and bedding rolls. Well, that simplifies things a great deal. But you should see my washing. Boy! I'll never be able to look an advertisement in the face that speaks of tattle-tale gray.

But, darling, I lost your last picture; all others, too, except a small one of both of us; and that hurts. It was in my trunk ready to move, and then things happened so fast I couldn't get your picture out of the trunk. God knows where it is now, but if I ever see anyone, Jap or any other, with it, I'll kill him. I had had it only a few days.

As you perhaps know, the last word from you was received before the 7th of December, 1941. I hope my last letter got through. All of your letters were lost, too, and I only hope everything burned.

Have you written to me? Please write often. Some of your letters will get through.

There are a multitude of things I'd like to say to you, and questions I'd like to ask, but the censor will have the last go at this before it reaches you.

Nothing has changed, sweetheart, and I'll be back in a short time and all this will be over with, and we'll have the life we planned together.

Hello to everybody and tell them to kindly do their part because I really believe we are doing ours, plus a little more.

Remember everything we talked about and promised for the time to come, for we will surely have it before long.

All my love forever—Your Husband.

The knowledge that John was alive and well after the two months of blankness was unbelievably wonderful. I went around in a glow, as though life had ebbed back into my soul as well as my body.

MARCH was as fortunate a month for me as February had been. Another letter arrived from John. This one, written in February from the Philippines, informed me by the return address that my husband had been promoted from Marine Gunner to First Lieutenant! John mentioned nothing about it in the letter itself, there were too many other things to say.

"It won't be long now—" John had written. "It won't be so very long until we're together again." While I was glad to hear that, while I wanted desperately to believe it, I had an increasingly oppressed sense that it wasn't true.

By the time John's letter reached me, the news reports from Asia and the South Pacific were even worse than they had been before, and the reports were as specific as they were gloomy. They told how our men and their staunch comrades, the Filipinos, were suffering a nightmare of heat and discomfort in the jungles. They were not only battling dank swamps and sucking mud, but diseases for which there was no medicine. I read that some of the men were already night blind from lack of proper food, and it was torturous to read of the things they were eating in their ravenous hunger when the food supply gave out.

John's letters made me begin to reason things out for myself. If he could be so brave under the most trying circumstances, I must, too. It was impossible for me to go on, day after day, hoping for letters that didn't come, living in a quicksand of emotion as news from the Pacific grew steadily worse. I had to do something to keep myself busy so I wouldn't have so much time to think. And most of all, I had to do something that would help win the war, win it as fast as possible so that John could really come back.

I applied for a job at the Kaiser iron and steel mills in Fontana and they

gave me one in their mail department. There wasn't the satisfaction some women have who work on the assembly line and count the planes as they come off as their contributions to their men. But I knew that every job in a defense plant is vital, so I plugged away at my work, and when, in just a few months the company put me in charge of the mail department, I felt as real a sense of accomplishment as if I, too, were building guns or planes or tanks.

TIME passed quickly. Bataan fell. Corregidor surrendered. The unequal fighting in the Philippines finally ceased.

What had happened to the men who had been battling there in the steaming jungles? The men to whom it had been impossible to send help? Who were trapped there, half starved, deathly tired and weak, bombarded unmercifully by the Japs.

The answer seemed to come for me the afternoon of May 13, 1942—an answer that seemed the end of the world. It was a telegram:

11 S 127 GOVT 5 EXTRA WASHINGTON
DC 335 PM MAY 13 1942

MRS. JOHN A. BURNS, 196 SIERRA AVE.
FONTANA, CALIF.

THE COMMANDANT U S MARINE CORPS REGRETS TO ADVISE YOU THAT ACCORDING TO THE RECORDS OF THIS HEADQUARTERS YOUR HUSBAND FIRST LIEUTENANT JOHN A. BURNS U. S. MARINE CORPS WAS PERFORMING HIS DUTY IN THE SERVICE OF HIS COUNTRY IN THE MANILA BAY AREA WHEN THAT STATION CAPITULATED. HE WILL BE CARRIED ON THE RECORDS OF THE MARINE CORPS AS MISSING PENDING FURTHER INFORMATION. NO REPORT OF HIS DEATH HAS BEEN RECEIVED AND HE MAY BE A PRISONER OF WAR. IT WILL PROBABLY BE SEVERAL MONTHS BEFORE DEFINITE OFFICIAL INFORMATION CAN BE EXPECTED CONCERNING HIS STATUS. SINCERE SYMPATHY IS EXTENDED TO YOU IN YOUR ANXIETY AND YOU ARE ASSURED THAT ANY REPORT RECEIVED WILL BE COMMUNICATED TO YOU PROMPTLY.

I pity any woman who receives one of those official telegrams. The experience is heart-rending, unforgettable. Somehow, though, it's impossible to believe the worst in any telegram that conveys bad news. Through all the uncertainty you continue to cling to the hope that the man you love must be all right! It's got to turn out that way!

The telegram had said that it would probably be several months before definite information could be expected about John. It was so infinitely much longer than that. It was eleven long months before any further news came.

The one thing I did get made it almost worse.

The very next day after I'd received the official telegram, a letter arrived that had been written by John on April 9, 1942. That's a date many other women besides myself will never forget. It was the date Bataan

finally surrendered to the Japs. I couldn't be sure exactly, where John was, but his handwriting was a mad scrawl, infinitely expressive of his danger and the briefness of his time. He had scratched out the letter in a momentary rest between life and death fighting. The letter was taken out on the last boat from the Philippines.

You women with loved ones in the Service might like to read John's letter to me—his last letter as a free man. This is what he wrote:

PASSED BY NAVAL CENSOR

April 9, 1942

Darling:

This is just another note. Maybe sometime I will be able to write to you as I want to—tell you the things I want to tell you, as I want to write and talk to you.

I am fine, feel very good, and have plenty to keep me busy.

Did you receive my message? Certainly hope so, and I am looking forward to a reply from you in a few days.

Sweetheart, I want some word from you terribly, but I am certain that you are all right or I should have received a message.

Do your best, darling—I am trying to do my share. And when this war is over, we'll begin our life together and forget the past. . . .

Write to Mother for me, and give the folks my best wishes, and all the others.

I love you, sweetheart, and whatever happens, I shall love and be yours forever.

Your husband,

JOHN.

I've re-read this letter many times in the past two years. It's been all I've had—the last message from him—the one way I knew that he was still alive some time during those final, terrible days on Luzon. Whether or not he was still living when the Japs took over I couldn't tell, and I was afraid to speculate. If I had actually known then what we learned just a few weeks ago of the Japs' treatment of their Philippine prisoners, I wonder if I would have been able to stand it.

WHEN the WAAC, the first American women's service organization, was established I kept watching the newspaper accounts of its progress with eager interest. A wonderful idea had formulated in my mind: John was missing, but if I joined the WAAC I could serve my country as he had. I could try to fill his place in my own small way and do the job he'd started, that he'd like so much to continue.

By this time just about our whole family was in the Service. My brother, Robert Bruce Jans, had enlisted in the Army Air Forces. John's brother, William Robert Burns, was in the Navy. And my cousin, James Albert, was in the Army and already over in Africa. Joining the Service myself would be helping them, too.

Furthermore—and this was a

breathless hope—the WAACs were to be allowed to go overseas when they were fully trained. If only they'd be sent to the Pacific area I might, by some wonderful streak of luck, be able to find John! In any case, although WAACs were not trained to use firearms, I was a dead shot. John had taught me how to handle a gun. And I felt deep down in my heart that if ever I got a chance to use a gun on a Jap, John's teaching might find a wonderful and ironic use in revenge.

I was the first Fontana woman to enroll in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. Even at that, though, there were already so many women ahead of me throughout the country it was three months before I could start my training.

I had a lot of stellar roles when I was in Hollywood. The films I appeared in played in thousands of theaters. But nothing ever compared, and nothing ever will, to the real-life role a girl can play in the WAC. Her part is small, but it's in the huge cast that fights in the theaters of war, and it's the most rewarding, the most satisfying performance she'll ever experience.

I really found myself in the WAAC. There was little time for worry or brooding. At night, sometimes, when the lights were out, it was hard to keep back the weeping tears, to tell myself over and over again that I was sure John was all right. But the days were much easier than they had been before. There were too many important things to do for me to lose courage.

Almost before I knew it, March was ending. I had completed basic training and had been assigned to study Administrative Specialist work in the Fort Des Moines school. A lot of the girls had been assigned to other schools at other posts, and some lucky ones were going right out into what we called "the field." That is, their civilian experience could be used by the Army without any further training, so they were to start right out working at army jobs on regular posts.

The last night we were all together in basic training we went in a body to mail call. Mail call, always the biggest occasion in the Army, had never been too appealing for me. Whenever my name was called out I was half afraid, never knowing when I'd get a letter I wanted or one that would end all my hopes.

But this night there were three letters for me: One from Mother, one from my brother Bob, and one from—the Marine Corps! I shivered as I tore open the envelope. It had been written March 12th, almost eleven months to the day since they had sent me the horrible news that John was missing. Was this news any better? Or was it worse?

I wasn't sure, I didn't know how to react. They told me that John was alive, but he was a prisoner of war—a prisoner of the Japs!

The next thing I knew I was in the post hospital. I was told that I'd collapsed.

I stayed in the hospital for several weeks, my nerves healing over from the shock. When I got out, I went back to work with a greater incentive than ever before. I became a woman with a mission.

After Administrative school, I was assigned to a job in the registrar's office at the post hospital of Fort Brady, in Sault Sainte Marie, Mich. For awhile I also did recruiting in Chicago, Ill.

I'm immensely proud to have been a part of such an organization and I'll always be grateful for the experiences and the friendships it brought me. My deep and lasting regret is that I had to leave.

My difficulty arose about the time the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps was changed to the Women's Army Corps—when the WAAC became the WAC. I had been informed by Washington just about then that John had been transferred from a Jap prison camp in the Philippines to one of the main prison camps in Japan. This meant that there was real hope for his release. When it might happen was vague, but the blessed fact remained that it might!

I was suddenly faced with the realization that if John should come back I might be overseas. Naturally I had signed up for overseas duty in the WAAC, because at that time John was missing and I thought I might be able to find him, be somewhere near him in any case. Now I also realized that if John should come back before the end of the war, if he should be released, I would still be in service.

Army regulations permit discharges for good reasons at the discretion of the Commanding Officer. But I couldn't be guaranteed a discharge if John should come back. Obviously, wars can't be run with exceptions and individual provisos made all along the way.

But in view of my changed circumstances I didn't feel that in all justice to John I could take a chance on not being able to be with him the minute he came home. So I was discharged instead of being sworn into the new WAC, and with tears in my eyes I said good-by to all my friends, to the WACs and the soldiers and the officers who had been so wonderful to me at Fort Brady. How I wished I could be staying with them!

THERE never will be anything comparable to the WAAC for me, but I think I've found the next-best thing to it in civilian life. It's a job as Auxiliary Military Policewoman at the Douglas Aircraft Company in Santa Monica, Calif. In many ways the work now is enough like the Army to fill the gaps of John's absence in my life and activities.

It's perhaps slightly fantastic that a former movie star should be doing such different things today. But I'm a different girl. I've lived reality these past years.

It would have been impossible for me not to have changed through all

the uncertainty and waiting. I'm only 31, yet my hair, the coal black color radiant with flaming red glints that John used to love, is now streaked with gray. I've changed in many other ways, too. I'm more serious and thoughtful, more mature, and I think I'm a better and finer person for what I've been through. I know that John won't be quite the same person when he gets back, either. Stagnation and brutal treatment in Jap prison camps for all these years are bound to have results.

There hasn't been any recent news

THREE THINGS

All the poets write about
"Three things I love."
These may be: the sapphire sea,
The turquoise sky above,
Or a snowflake on a glove.

But I am just an artless girl,
These the three I sing:
By-and-by, the twist of His tie,
And a diamond—the size of a hummingbird's eye—
In a new engagement ring.

—MARION DOYLE

about the possibility of John's being released. Since we have so comparatively few Jap prisoners at the present time, the exchange of Japanese military prisoners would take place only for the convenience of that government. In other words, I understand that except for rare cases the Japs won't permit a man's exchange unless he is so nearly dead he could be of no use either to them or us.

However, I do know that in any case John will be one of the first prisoners to be released at the end of the war. And with hope in my heart I'm preparing now for his return, to help him through the adjustment period he'll have when he gets here. The mental as well as the physical strain he's endured in Jap prison camps will have been terrible, so it's up to me to give him all the loving care and help I can to see him through.

I've kept a scrapbook of everything concerning John since he left for the Philippines. In it I have carefully pasted my few letters from him, our wedding picture, official word I've had about him from the government—even the newspaper clipping that listed the "missing" at Bataan.

I keep a book for John, too, containing important news items about events that have happened during the war, clippings about Marine friends of his who have been decorated for bravery at Guadalcanal and other battles, and

about those who were also taken prisoner in the Philippines. So many of our friends are prisoners! Just about John's whole detachment was either killed or taken.

I buy John Christmas presents every year, and hold them for his return. For Christmas this year I got him a big chest to hold his shooting equipment, and I cleaned all his rifle and pistol parts and gear and arranged them for him in the chest. His things will be ready for him whenever he comes home.

I am having some large glassed-in cases made for John's shooting medals and one for his athletic medals. And I am going to arrange all the things he had in his own scrapbook—photographs, mementos of his campaigns and travels and accomplishments—put them in order as things occurred during his life. Then I'm going to have one huge book made of them, and if I have the time, I'll consolidate all of my scrapbooks into one big one to match his.

There is so little that I can do for John right now, but what I am doing I know he will appreciate when he comes back. I feel that these little things will let him know that his life didn't end when he was taken prisoner; that there will be so much more to follow, for him to fill in, after he comes back.

Our scrapbooks not only tell his personal history, but his part in making world history. They should provide the link that will bridge the gap between his old life and the new one that is coming after this is all over. I am leaving a lot of room in this new book. There will be a place for all John's new adventures when that time comes.

I love John so much. I can't wait to get him back. But I've learned only too well that waiting and anxious hopes as well as fear are only a few of the evils of war.

I have encountered an organization that is preying on the fears of women for their loved ones in the Service, and in that way trying to get them to urge for an immediate peace with Japan and Germany. Much as I want my husband back as quickly as possible, I would never consider such a thing. John himself would say the same, I know.

The thing John fought for, the thing he's living a hell for in a Jap prison camp is the winning of the war—the unconditional surrender of our enemies. An immediate peace might bring him back to me sooner, but it would leave our enemies strong, and then John and all the other men would have to fight, to go through the same terrible experiences all over again in a few years. I am telling you this because we women must not be shortsighted enough to cause this dreadful thing to happen. Our future happiness can be assured only when the power of our enemies has been destroyed forever.

THE END

I Get Along Without You Very Well

Continued from page 26

"Look there!" Cliff said, and put his hand on Jane's shoulder by way of emphasis. "He's one of the richest young men about town. As rich as one of the Rockefellers or Morgans. Not married. Could have any girl in town he wanted. Why, if he even looks at a girl it means she's important! Veddy social!"

WHENEVER they saw Jay, Cliff added a little something. He was more impressed by Jay Rhoades than by movie stars.

"Stars are self-made," he'd say, "but Jay Rhoades was born with a diamond-studded platinum spoon in his mouth."

Jane knew that Cliff wished he knew Jay Rhoades—or any of the important people he spoke about. Oh, she knew all about Cliff! Knew that he was a climber, in a way—though he never really climbed very far. A snob. A pretender, too, for he couldn't afford any of the things he really liked.

Lying now with her head buried in the pillows, she visualized his profile that was a little too heavy, his rather impudent nose, the shoulders that were not quite broad enough, his dark hair. He was tall—taller than Jay Rhoades, whom he admired so much. Jay was blond and slight.

"I want him back!" she said to herself. And then, "I'll get him back!" And she didn't know at all how she was going to do it.

There hadn't been any quarrel. That was the odd part about it. One day, Cliff was as attentive as ever. Then he just didn't make any more engagements! When he came into the office, Jane smiled and asked, "How are you?" She was careful not to ask possessive questions. "Why haven't I seen you?" or "Where have you been?" She knew better than that. And Cliff said, "Hello, Merry Sunshine! You look fresh as paint!" But he didn't try to make a date!

Elsie Phipps, the telephone girl, told Jane what was wrong.

"I see Cliff Halliday is stepping out," she said.

"What do you mean? He's always stepping out."

"Not this far, he's not! You know who he was out with last night? Well, it was Glory Farnum!"

"Not really!" said Jane. She didn't know what else to say. Glory Farnum was one of this year's debutantes. Not top drawer, exactly, but important enough to get her pictures in the newspapers. She was always doing Good Deeds—for publication. She was usually sponsoring a Stray Cat Club or a Half-adopt a Half-orphan Society.

"He's stepping out—and up," Jane

admitted. Why, Glory Farnum was just what Cliff Halliday was looking for! Well-known. Pretty enough. Rich. Young.

Oh, dear! How could she compete with Glory Farnum? If he had loved her . . . but evidently he hadn't loved her. Glory Farnum had everything! If Glory only turned him down!

It looked as if Glory had no intention of turning him down. They went everywhere together. Cliff would bring the news to Elsie, who would relay it to Jane. After awhile that wasn't necessary. The columns began taking it up. Winchell and Walker, Kilgallen and Sullivan. Little things. *Glory Farnum with Clifford Halliday. Or, One foursome at the opening consisted of Glory Farnum, Doretta Doyle, Harry Marvin and Clifford Halliday.* Not much—but a million times more than Cliff had ever had before. Just what Cliff wanted. And undoubtedly more than he had ever dared hope for.

"I wonder where he met her," Jane said, as casually as she could, to Elsie.

"Oh, hadn't you heard?" Elsie was running over with facts. "His boss gave him one ticket to a charity affair. And there was Glory Farnum—stuck at one of those fortune wheels, and not doing too well. So Mr. Halliday introduces himself and puts on an act—you should hear him tell it! He sticks around, and the wheel makes a lot of money. Then he takes her home. And the next night he takes her out. And she asks him to dinner—they got a huge apartment—you ought to hear him tell it!"

"That would be something!" said Jane. And was glad she was spared that, anyhow.

So she tried to be gay—daytimes. And let her heart break at night.

She'd have been alone most of the time if it hadn't been for Danny Clarke. Danny was a wisp of a boy, and not too bright. Certainly no substitute for Cliff. Being with him was just a little better than being alone. Danny didn't take her to night clubs—he couldn't afford even sitting at the bar. He took her to neighborhood movies, because they weren't expensive.

"Danny," Jane asked one night as they were coming home from the movies, "will you take me to the Stork for drinks if—I pay for them?"

"Sure!" said Danny. "If you want to go. I only wish I could afford the price."

"You're swell," Jane said. "We'll have one drink at the bar."

They had one drink at the bar. There wasn't anyone there Jane knew. That is, Cliff wasn't there.

"Let's go to Monte Carlo," Jane said. She couldn't afford that, either. But she wanted to see—

At Monte Carlo there wasn't a sign of Cliff. But standing at the bar, alone, was Jay Rhoades. In spite of his millions, he looked lonely. Funny. Well, there were thousands of people he could have gone with. Maybe he wanted to be alone. That was possible, too, Jane knew.

No use staying at Monte Carlo. And no use trailing to any more night clubs when you couldn't afford them. Well, Danny had had a nice time. Danny was a swell kid. Being with him was practically like being alone—except a girl can't go alone to a night club.

When she was alone in her room, where she could let her heart go to pieces, Jane had to admit that that wasn't the way. In the first place, she couldn't afford to run around trying to catch a glimpse of Cliff. In the second place, if she had seen him, what then? Cliff would have been aloof and elegant—and with his grand crowd. And she'd be with poor little Danny, who didn't fit in, and didn't even quite know how to pay a check or if you ought to tip at a bar.

Those were the things Cliff knew. He knew all about bars and restaurants and night clubs and tipping and how to act so that you seemed to have money. Not that those things mattered. But they mattered to Cliff—they were part of Cliff.

Cliff was all right. Grand. In—lots of ways. He'd been grand, that is, until he met Glory Farnum.

"I'll get him back!" Jane said. And cried herself to sleep.

THE next day Elsie had news for her. "Your ex-boy friend was just in," she said.

"Who?" Elsie pretended to be perplexed.

"Mr. Cliff Halliday, the important society wolf, no less! Well, anyhow, next Thursday Miss Glory Farnum is giving him a birthday party at Versailles. I think it's to announce something, though he didn't say what. Just hinted—and told about the birthday party."

"My!" said Jane, and added, "My! My!" And didn't know what else to say.

That day it was pretty difficult pretending. But she was pleasant and smiling, though she didn't do her work very well.

That night, the tea room seemed terrible. Jane couldn't even eat her dessert. Later, there wasn't anything on the radio worth listening to. She cried herself to sleep.

On Wednesday she had an idea. It might not amount to anything, she knew, but it was better than sitting with her hands folded. Better than crying herself to sleep. "I'll get him back!" she told herself.

She stopped Danny in the hall. "Want to take me to a couple of night clubs tonight?" she asked. And added, quickly, "On me."

"You're cooking with dynamite!"

Danny said. "Wouldn't I be the cluck to refuse?"

"We'll go to the movie first. Pick me up at eight."

"With my hair brushed for stepping!" Danny said.

Jane barely knew what the movie was about. She was so excited she could hardly sit still. It was an awful thing to do. Why, anything could happen!

"We'll go to Monte Carlo first," Jane said.

At Monte Carlo she looked around eagerly. But then, she was always looking around eagerly these days. Cliff was not there. But this time it wasn't Cliff she was looking for!

They sat at the bar for a long time. Gay groups went in and out. No one spoke to them. As a matter of fact, Jane didn't even bother to talk to Danny. They just sat. And drank. Three drinks!

"Let's go to Morocco," Jane said.

She couldn't afford much more of this, she knew.

They went to Morocco, which was very gay—for other people. They had a drink there. And looked at the palm trees and people dancing.

"I've got an idea!" Jane said. "Let's go back to Monte Carlo!"

"It's a funny idea," Danny said. "But it's your party. I guess you know what you're doing."

"I hope I do," Jane said. And whispered a little prayer.

There he was, alone at the bar! Not Cliff. Jay Rhoades! Just as she had prayed he would be.

She never knew how she got the courage. She had never done such a thing before in all her life. But this was so important! To Jane it was the most important thing in the world.

"Wait here," she said to Danny. "I—I want to speak to a friend of mine—over there at the bar."

"Sure!" Danny said.

JANE marched over to the bar. Something had happened to her legs. They'd changed into gelatine—and not very stiff gelatine, at that.

"Mr. Rhoades," she began. She wished she could have said "I met you at . . ." or, "We've a mutual friend —" and go on from there.

"Yes?" said Jay Rhoades. He looked at her. He had nice eyes, she decided. Gray. Could look pretty cold—but they just looked questioning, now.

"I—I—you don't know me," Jane began.

"That's what I was afraid of," Jay Rhoades said. "But surely that is a slight error that can be overcome."

"How nice of you!" Jane said. And she smiled, too. "But wait until you hear what I have to say!"

"I'm waiting!" he said.

Suddenly, Jane was tongue tied. She felt the unsophisticated blush over her face and knew she would never be able to say what she had planned.

She was relieved when Rhoades laughed kindly.

"You were about to say something,"

he encouraged. "And won't you have a drink?"

"Not until I tell you. It's this!" Now the words tumbled out. "If—if you haven't got a date tomorrow night, would you mind awfully taking me to Versailles? I know it's a dreadful thing—"

"I can't think what's so dreadful about taking a girl to the Versailles. It sounds quite jolly, if you'll allow me to take you there. Unless you want to kill someone. . . ."

"Oh, no!" said Jane. "I just want to go."

"You've never been and you're crazy to see the place? A visiting fireman?"

"I've seen it a lot of times. And I live here in town. I—I may as well tell you." And she told him. A lot of it. Most of it. About Cliff. And even how he'd pointed Jay Rhoades out to her.

"I'm pretty silly, I guess," she said. "But I do so want to get him back. And this is the only thing I can think of."

"I'd love to help in the cause of true love," said Rhoades.

Jane told him where she lived, so he could call for her.

"Now, won't you ask your escort over for a drink?" he asked. So there was Danny, who didn't know who Rhoades was, anyhow. And the three of them were drinking and talking, as pleasant as you please!

Rhoades was very nice, Jane decided. A sort of sarcastic touch to what he said. But, under the circumstances! If—if only he wasn't fooling! If he'd only taken her seriously! Oh, well, it was the best she could do!

She had too much to think about that night, when she was alone, to shed tears. And the next day she was so busy she didn't have to pretend to be cheerful.

She hurried home after work, and took a shower and made up carefully. And then dressed with nervous haste. She sat waiting. What if he forgot? What if he never in the world intended to come? What if. . .

Then the bell rang! And there was Jay Rhoades!

He was even better looking than she remembered him. Smooth! Wouldn't Cliff be impressed!

He had a corsage for her. White orchids.

"I ought to show my devotion, I felt," he said.

Her dress was blue. The orchids looked wonderful on it.

"They are my first white orchids,"

she said. "And I don't deserve them. I picked you up! Well, it was my first pick-up."

"It wasn't mine—but it was my most altruistic," he said. And then, "It's early. We ought to arrive late at Versailles. What about cocktails someplace else first?"

So they went to 1—2—3 and listened to Roger Stearns play. Jay Rhoades knew people, but he didn't point them out the way Cliff did. He either spoke to them or he paid no attention to them. If he knew them, and thought it would amuse her, he told Jane little anecdotes concerning them. A couple of people stopped at their table, and she met them. It was fun! If her heart weren't broken. . . .

THEY got to Versailles, finally.

Jane's eyes swept the large room quickly. Yes, there was a party near the dance floor. A long table. And yes, Cliff was there! Everything was all right—as all right as it could be, now. He'd see her with Jay Rhoades.

"I'll get him back!" she told herself.

The head waiter led them to the best table. Jane pretended to be so absorbed in Rhoades that she didn't even look around.

"Is he here?" Rhoades asked.

"Yes. You know Glory Farnum?"

"Well, yes, I know her."

"At her table. At her right. Black hair."

"He's—quite a boy!" Rhoades said. "I see what you mean." But he didn't explain.

Now that she was where Cliff was and knew that he would see her, if he hadn't seen her already, Jane relaxed. Oh, it wasn't like being with Cliff! Cliff was with another girl! His new girl! But here he was. She could see him if she looked around. She didn't look around.

Rhoades ordered dinner. Jane loved the way he did it. Why, he knew all about food! Of course! But then, he never had to glance even once at the price side of the menu.

The dinner was wonderful. There was a special chicken hash in cream sauce, all brown on the edges, a crisp salad, and a grand dessert of ice cream, chocolate and cherries that seemed better at Jane's age than it probably ever would seem to her again.

They danced, then. Rhoades was a swell dancer. No better than Cliff, of course—and he didn't hold her nearly as tight—but he was good.

They had a good time. And out of

LIFE STORY AND THE WAR

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How Hollywood Saves It... Smartly

Continued from page 59

by using old-fashioned rags to curl the ends of her hair. The difference being this; the rags she uses are strips cut from a remnant of checked gingham! Thus the inability to get aluminum curlers is no longer a hardship and the rag curls are actually more natural looking. Ginger Rogers really makes her perfume work for her. Instead of applying directly to skin she soaks a small piece of absorbent cotton with it, touches cotton to back of ears, then tucks it into her bra. At the end of a sweet smelling day the still perfumed cotton is dropped into her lingerie drawer, thereby working overtime. There's a catch to this trick however; don't mix your perfumes!

With the advent of summer and the new naked look to summer clothes, shoulders and backs are going to be under public scrutiny. Kathryn Grayson supplemented back and shoulder exercises to fill out hollows, with lubricating treatments (self applied). These treatments used up appalling amounts of her precious face creams so Kathryn tried baby oil with wonderful results. The method is very simple; just pour oil into palm of hand and rub into skin. You'll notice a difference in a very few days and will be delighted with your smooth, supple, scrutiny-defying epidermis.

Wee Margaret O'Brien—remember her in *Journey for Margaret?*—thought up this conservation idea herself and passed it on to her mother. Margaret's favorite dress became too short. She asked her mother to sew an embroidered ruffle under the hem so it looked like an old-fashioned petticoat. Now, many of Margaret's gingham dresses from last year are ruffled and very cute looking they are too. Particularly recommended for little girls with long straight hair or pigtails with bows on them.

As for Jennifer Jones, her recent and spectacular rise to fame (*The Song of Bernadette*) is, in part, based upon a series of conservation tricks. Practiced assiduously during the years when making both ends meet was as important to daily living as dramatic training was to her ultimate success, Jennifer's saving "graces" lay in her wizardry with food. Foremost among them was and is her absolute refusal to throw away a speck of the water in which vegetables have been cooked. It goes into a jar in the icebox and every two or three days emerges as stock for thick luscious soups, or gravy for stews, or the base for delectable sauces. Every last bit of vitamins go where they're supposed to... inside you.

THE END

the corner of her eyes Jane tried to see what Cliff was doing.

"Your boy friend seems to be doing all right," Rhoades said. "Haven't you spoken to him?"

"I haven't caught his eye."

"Well, you must catch his eye once and seem surprised. And speak very cordially," Rhoades said.

"Thank you kindly, Teacher," said Jane.

"The look you give him," Rhoades said, "must combine *Think of seeing you here!* with a bit of *Why I used to know you quite well!*"

"I'll do my best!" Jane said.

They got up to dance. Jane's eyes swept the room, found Cliff. He was looking at her, all right! Jane looked surprised. And smiled graciously. She turned to Rhoades.

"Did I do all right?" she asked.

"Perfect!" he said. "And now forget him. Or pretend to. All the rest of the evening. Look at me—and don't tell me that's too difficult!"

So she looked at him. And they laughed, as if something very funny had happened.

"We're leaving, now," Rhoades said, after awhile.

"Oh, did I..."

"You did exactly the right thing. But we've been here long enough. We'll go on to other places, if you like. We may run into your friends later. If not—well, this is best, really. You asked for my help, you know."

They went to Monte Carlo. And the Stork. And Morocco. Not at the bars, but at the best tables! It was fun! That is, Jane felt it would have been fun if her heart weren't broken.

She watched everyone who came in, even while she pretended not to watch anyone but Jay Rhoades. Just as she'd given up hope, there they were! The whole party. And very gay!

"You must ignore them entirely this time," Rhoades said.

So Jane ignored them. After all, she was used to acting. She smiled at Rhoades, and laughed with Rhoades. And they found a lot of things to laugh about.

And then, when she really wasn't expecting it, two people stopped at her table. Cliff and Glory Farnum! There were introductions. And Cliff said, "I couldn't believe my eyes!"

"What's wrong?" asked Rhoades. "Am I such a disreputable escort for a young lady?"

"I—I didn't know you and Jane knew each other."

"Oh, yes. Met weeks ago. She went to school with my cousin, Elaine Forrest. And she and Elaine happened to meet—at luncheon at the St. Regis. A happy accident for me. Elaine brought her in for cocktails. And Jane has been good enough to trail around with a me a bit." He gave Jane an affectionate look. "I'd ask you both to join us, but I've just asked the waiter to bring my check. We've decided to go on."

And that was that!

Rhoades deposited Jane at her door. "It was a good evening," he said. "I

had fun. I hope you did too."

"You'll never know how grateful I am!" Jane said. "Why, it was wonderful. If—if I get him back..."

"We'll manage that," Rhoades said.

"You mean you'll..."

"Why, child, we've just started! This alone wouldn't do the trick. And I really have a cousin named Elaine. A swell girl. If I got her and one of her pals, could you have dinner on Saturday? Just the four of us. We may run into your boy friend..."

"It would be grand!" Jane said.

The door closed. Jane was alone. But she didn't cry herself to sleep. She thought and thought, instead. Oh, she was frightfully jealous of Glory Farnum. That was true. But Glory wasn't so very pretty, really. And she'd gathered from Jay—he'd asked her to call him that—that she wasn't really important socially. Oh, she was still the same to Cliff. But it sort of gave Jane courage. It was something to work on. And Cliff coming over to the table! To meet Jay! Oh, probably! Out of curiosity? More than likely. But he came!

And Saturday night!

Jane spent all of her spare time thinking about it. On Saturday morning she bought a new dress, and it took all of the afternoon to shorten the hem. It was a pretty dress—gray and sort of sedate, but becoming, too. She didn't want Jay to be ashamed of her. After all, she'd thrown herself at him. And he'd been wonderful.

Jay called for her, and he was joyful and friendly. And his cousin turned out to be a very sweet girl. Sort of breezy and natural, not all the stiff type Jane was afraid of. Elaine said what she thought. And listened with interest to what others said. Her escort was an army captain, and he was swell, too. They had dinner at the Plaza, and then went on and on. They had a grand time. Jane watched and watched—without pretending to—but she didn't see Cliff.

ON SUNDAY, Jay asked Jane and Elaine and the captain and half a dozen others to his apartment.

Jane never had seen such a beautiful place to live. It was high up and there was a wonderful view of the river from the wide terrace. The livingroom was oak-paneled and had a lot of leather furniture in it. Lots of books, too. The draperies looked old and yet good enough to eat. Silk, of a sort of winey red.

But of course she didn't see Cliff! A day wasted? Perhaps. But without Jay's invitation, she wouldn't have seen him, anyhow. She'd have stayed in her little cubicle and cried.

Now, she had fun. Everyone laughed and talked. And then Jay said, "Stay and have dinner with Elaine and me. Just the three of us. The captain is off on a mission."

They took her to a restaurant she'd never even heard of. And there was wonderful French food.

"Have you seen Carmen Jones?" Jay asked.

Jane hadn't seen it, and said so. "What about going with me, Tuesday night? I think you'll like it. Grand and amusing lyrics to the Bizet music, and such gorgeous costumes. And later, we can go a-hunting."

"I'd love it!" Jane said.

In two weeks her name was in all the columns. A new romance! If Jay Rhoades was seen with a girl, that was news! One column asked who she was. Another spoke of her as a "well-known model."

THEN, into her office marched Cliff! Looking just the same! Hearty and full of energy. What had Jay called him? Flashy! That was it. "You certainly are stepping out," he said.

"If you want to call it that," said Jane.

"I thought, that time I saw you, that it was sort of an accident. But it seems you're keeping it up. Hitting all the high spots. Name in the paper and everything. And with Jay Rhoades!"

"That seems to be the way it is," said Jane.

"Having a good time?"

"A wonderful time."

"Well, I am surprised!"

"Why, am I the type that men avoid?"

"Now, Jane none of that! You know I always thought a lot of you. We had good times together. I—I guess you haven't any time for an old friend."

"It depends on who the old friend is."

There they were—as friendly as ever!

"What about dinner tonight? Call for you at eight?"

A date with Cliff!

Jane hurried home from the office. Took a shower. Put on the new gray dress. Why, this was what she had been hoping for, praying for, waiting for!

Cliff looked for her promptly. And Jane called at him—and knew that she ought to feel thrilled. And wondered if she felt thrilled enough. Wasn't this her great moment!

They went to "a little restaurant I heard about." It was small; all right. And dreary. And inexpensive. The food was cold and not too well prepared. That wasn't Cliff's fault. He couldn't afford any better, Jane knew. Glory Farnum always picked up night club checks. Everyone knew that. That was why Cliff could go to grand places with Glory.

The movie was good. But when Cliff held her hand, Jane pulled it away. It wasn't that she didn't love Cliff. Of course she did! But, somehow, holding hands at the movies...

They went to Monte Carlo. And sat at the bar. Cliff began to point out people to Jane. And stopped.

"I guess you know all about these people," he said.

"No," said Jane. "That is, if you mean Jay pointed them out to me—he didn't. We never had time for that." Well, it was true! She didn't know who these people were. And didn't care.

Cliff didn't point out any more celebrities.

Something had happened. When Cliff used to take her out everything had been wonderful. Now, she didn't want to sit at the bar with a man who couldn't afford it and acted as if he were doing her a favor. A man who talked too loudly and didn't really have a thing to say when he wasn't pointing out celebrities or, well, sort of bragging about himself.

Was this Cliff? The man she loved? The man she'd cried herself to sleep over, night after night?

"What's the matter?" Cliff asked. "Don't you care about me any more?"

Cliff asking that! Cliff, whom she loved! Hadn't she said, "I'll get him back"? Why, she had put all of her energies into it! She'd done everything she knew how. And here Cliff was, leaning close to her, asking, in just the tone she had prayed so to hear, if she still cared about him.

It wasn't until she was alone in her room that she realized what had happened. Why, it was terrible!

"You're fickle!" she told herself.

"Why, you don't know your own mind! You go to pieces because the man you love doesn't care for you. You throw yourself at—at one of the most important men in town, so you can get him back. Out of pity Jay Rhoades is kind to you. And what happens? You fall out of love with the man you've been nuts about—and you fall for the one man in the world you couldn't get if the world stood still! You said, 'I'll get him back!' You got him back! And now you don't want him. My fine young lady, you're out on a limb!"

One thing was sure—she didn't want to see Cliff again. That was over. Why, Cliff was cheap! She'd known that, in a way. But she'd never let herself admit it. She couldn't help but see it, now. She even realized how lucky she was because she didn't love Cliff. No more wet pillows! No more planning to see him. No more worrying about getting him back. There was a sort of hollow feeling where her love for Cliff had been. Almost as if she'd been operated on. Well, in a way, it was a sort of operation! But she'd got over it. She had to smile to herself. "The patient recovered."

But now there was something else. Jay Rhoades! Would she have to go through all of those heartaches again? For Jay would never care for her, she knew. There wouldn't be any way to get Jay.

When Jay Rhoades asked her to go to dinner with him, she accepted—and then felt guilty about it. After all, he'd taken her places for one reason—to get Cliff back. And now she'd have to tell him what had happened. And lose him, too! And be all alone again.

They dined at the Colony. The food was wonderful, and so was Jay. And, half way through dinner, she had to tell him.

"It—it's all over between Cliff and me," she said.

"What do you mean—over? I thought he hadn't paid any attention to you and you—"

"And I wanted him back. That's it. You were wonderful! Only I went out with him again and. . . ."

"And he didn't pay any attention to you?"

"On the contrary, he paid a lot of attention. He—he was just different. I'm horrible! I'm fickle! I—I just don't love him any more!"

"Of course you don't!" Jay said. "When I first glimpsed that one I couldn't see a girl like you giving him a tumble. It's a good thing you're over it."

"But think of all of the trouble I put you to, to get him back. You tried so hard. I feel terrible about that."

Jay put back his head and laughed.

"That's the funniest thing I ever heard!" he said. "Do you actually think that's the reason I trailed around with you? I enjoyed it. You must know that. Every minute of it. I should have been jealous of the guy, but I figured out that whether you did or didn't get a chance at him again, sooner or later you'd be fed up. I'm glad that's over, I can tell you."

"Then it wasn't just because. . . ." It took Jane awhile to absorb that.

"And now that you've got him off your mind, maybe you'll pay some attention to me."

"Of course!" Jane said. "Why, of course, Jay!"

BUT it wasn't until he was bringing her home after a night of color and gaiety and nibbles at half a dozen night clubs, that Jay said something else.

"I never thought matrimony would appeal to me," he said. "I've fought off dozens of scheming mothers. Oh, I know that I'm a matrimonial sugar plum! But it seems to me, if you'd go into the thing with me, marriage might be a very happy state."

"Are—are you proposing to me?"

"Sounds like it. You really don't want me to get down on one knee?"

"Gee!" said Jane. And then "Gee!" again.

"Do you mean that for an acceptance or a refusal?" asked Jay. He seemed pretty pleased—and pretty sure of himself.

And then something happened to Jane. She looked at Jay. She saw his nice, blond hair and his pleasant, smiling face. And she knew that the vague dream she'd had about being in love with him, when she'd found out she wasn't in love with Cliff, was only a dream, after all. Jay was swell! Wonderful! But his life—the life of night clubs and bars, of so much money that you didn't have to think twice about it—wasn't her life at all. Jay, day after day, wasn't what she was looking for.

"Oh, Jay," she said. "I—I think you're wonderful. . . ."

"You're accepting me then, I take it—"

"I mean— Oh, Jay, I can't marry you! I don't know how I know it, but I'm not in love with you. Not really. Not the way I want to be in love when I get married."

"Well, that's honest!" He seemed

more than a bit amazed. "You don't want to think it over? I'm conceited enough to think I'm not something to be dismissed easily. I've never asked any other girl to marry me. . . ."

"Oh, I do appreciate it, Jay! More than I can tell you. It's wonderful of you! I'm going to look back all my life and remember it. It's grand—happening to me. But it's not my life, Jay. I don't know what I mean. I just know. . . ."

"I see," Jay said. And Jane knew that he did see.

And when he left her and she went into her own little apartment, it was as if something had happened to that, too. It was still drab and ugly. But it was her own! A place to—wait.

That was it! For Jane knew, now, that she would wait. For the one man,

whom she'd love deeply and forever, to come along. She wasn't afraid or even doubtful or lonely. Getting Cliff back when she wanted him back had done something for her confidence. Having Jay propose to her had given it another boost. Why, she could get a man back if she wanted to! Get him away from a rich and desirable debutante, even! And one of the richest men in town had asked her to marry him!

But that wasn't what she wanted. She didn't know exactly what it was that she did want. Love, of course, and a man who loved her in return. A man who was tender and understanding and strong. And good-looking—but that wasn't too important. A man who wanted a home and who didn't care too much about night clubs and

celebrities. But he'd like the theater and books and movies and the radio. And nice talks. And good times together. Someone to look after her—and be interested in her, as she'd be interested in him. The picture of him became clearer and clearer as she thought about it. And he was worth waiting for.

Somehow, as she thought about it, she had the very definite feeling, almost an augury, that she wouldn't have to wait very long. It gave her a fine warm, happy confidence. She put up her head and her eyes looked as if someone had thrown a whole package of star-dust into them. Yes, undoubtedly, the right man was just around the corner.

THE END

A Very Worldly Woman?

Continued from page 25

the suffragettes nor in the new Bull Moose party which he dismissed as "a bunch of half-baked radicals." Besides, he wasn't really a part of the town life either, as he was careful to imply, belonging rather to The Lake Crowd and the great world beyond of Princeton, New York, Stanley Steamers, haughty bulldozers and champagne suppers.

With relief Margaret heard her daughter clattering down the scarred manse stairs and out to the porch. She looked on Judy with new respect. How did she keep this difficult young man interested?

For interested he obviously was. His face lighted. His hand went up to his tall collar which apparently had become chokingly tight at sight of Judy.

They dashed off down the steps together, Don taking charge of the lunch box of sandwiches and deviled eggs and Judy swinging her bag that bulged with her alpaca bathing suit, cap, long black stockings and water wings.

"Judy!" Margaret gasped in dismay. But her voice was lost in the uproar of getting the Stanley Steamer started.

Long after the auto had snorted its lordly way down the street, Margaret sat there staring. There was nothing she could do now but wait for the worst. For Judy, after obediently putting away her newest Princess Paulina frock, had simply worn another one—older and less enchanting, but indubitably out of a Sloane Box.

Margaret was sick with worry, really sick, so that she had to lie down in a

dark room with a wet washcloth on her forehead. She pictured every possible kind of meeting between Judy and the Princess. With the Princess indulgent and patronizing. Or arrogant and snuffy. Or, worst of all, ignorant of her mother's benefactions. Margaret could just see her staring with pretty incredulity at Judy's dress and saying, "How odd! I had a dress exactly like that years ago, but I spilled claret punch down the front and it had to be thrown away. . . ." Every eye would focus on Judy's skirt with the slightly faded pinkish stain (you'd never have noticed it if you hadn't been looking for it), and there'd be a ghastly pause. Judy's face would whiten, and she'd say—but what would she say?

In Jeffersonville it wouldn't matter. Lots of Judy's friends were made-overs, and everybody knew that Judy's father had two degrees and that her mother was a Vaughn. But the summer Lake Crowd, those wealthy, cruel, superficial young people, judged only by appearances. And appearances could be humiliating and abasing.

SHE knew a fierce, irrational rage at the ministry, the Board of Trustees, Matthew and all who were responsible for girls like Judy having to wear cast-offs from people like the Sloanes.

I ought to have told her about the Princess's being here, she reproached herself, pressing the wet washcloth against her hot eyeballs. I ought to have said right out that all my teachings about the unimportance of material things and the folly of false pride were just so much hopeful hypocrisy. Pride can be hurt, and material things can count terribly when you suddenly come face to face with the girl whose old clothes you are wearing! I'll warn Judy the minute she comes in tonight that she mustn't put on any of the Princess's clothes for the rest of the summer. Oh, if only she doesn't meet her today!

But even the luxury of worrying had to be curtailed. She had to phone all the Cradle Roll mothers and sit through a call from tiresome old Mrs.

Portage and get ready to teach her Sunday School class.

Supper was over at last. Matthew was in his study. The hired girl had gone walking. Johnny was somewhere in Iowa selling his pans and his Compendium. Damaris was visiting a Jepson College friend. The two littlest ones were out at the farm.

The house was much too quiet. Margaret picked up her sewing and counted stitches and minutes till Judy should return. She'd know by the very way she ran up the walk whether or not it had happened. She bit off a thread fiercely to keep her lips from trembling. Oh, if only she isn't hurt!

It was 9 o'clock; 9:30. Time she was getting back.

Presently a chugging roar announced the arrival of \$2,000 worth of noise and smell and elegance. Her heart almost stopped. She heard a gay, over-the-shoulder good-by, then light, running footsteps.

Everything must be all right! She hadn't met the Princess yet. Margaret bent her head over her sewing to say foolish little prayers of gratitude and then to apologize to the Lord for bothering Him about cast-off clothes and the feelings of 17-year-olds. "But thou knowest how terribly conventional and sensitive they are at that age, because You made them that way," she finished defensively as Judy rushed into the room.

"It was simply a topnotcher of a day, Mama! And that crazy Don begged me all the way home to come to his fall party at the State U. As though railroad tickets grew on hat trees! He said he wouldn't go back to school if I didn't promise. Imagine! And I'm simply starved—couldn't I have just a teeny piece of that cold roast for a sandwich, if I slice it thin?"

Margaret nodded absently. Now was the time to tell her. "I saw in the paper—" she ventured, but Judy was already out in the kitchen, peering into the icebox. Margaret was suddenly aware of Matthew in the doorway behind her.

"Speaking of that roast—" he began,

clearing his throat in embarrassment, and Margaret thought with stifled love and laughter that it was amazing how a handsome man of 44 could look both patriarchal and small-boy at the same time. "As a matter of fact, I stopped in at the Swanson shack this afternoon and found him out of work again and her in bed with another baby and no food in the house. When I got home you were lying down, so I just wrapped up the roast and a loaf of your good bread and took them back. I know he's shiftless and that they have no business having eight children when none of them are quite bright, but what else could I do?"

Margaret rolled up her sewing with a sigh and let Plato, the fox terrier, out. As she passed her husband she reached up and ruffled his hair. "Nothing else, of course, silly. But you're likely to get a little tired of codfish and dried beef before the week is out."

His answering look as he caught her hand and kissed it was a touching mixture of relief and utter confidence in her.

Long after Matthew was fast asleep beside her that night his look remained to haunt her. I can't warn Judy now, she thought hopelessly. I'll just have to let things take their course, for I'd be going back on all that Matthew lives by. And there aren't any half measures in the way of warnings. Either material things are unimportant, as Matthew believes, and it doesn't make any difference whose old clothes you wear, or our whole way of life as a family has been based on falsity.

She drew a long, quivering breath. She knew she was being a very worldly woman, but she was going to hope that Judy needn't meet Paulina Sloane this summer. How could she keep Judy from wearing the Princess's clothes when they were the only decent ones the girl possessed?

The summer slid along, and Providence seemed kind. Polly Sloane spent a good deal of time in the city. And maybe Don was not quite so close to The Lake Crowd as he would have one believe. Then, too, four miles was a sizable distance to cover, even in an auto that could make it in half an hour,

barring breakdowns, and other trouble. Margaret took time out from her canning to wrestle with crackling tissue-paper patterns, lengths of cotton crepe for kimonos and billows of white nainsook for petticoats, corset covers and night gowns. She was getting Judy ready for Jepson.

The girl seemed so cheerful over the prospect that Margaret sometimes pedaled the sewing machine with compressed fury. It wasn't fair! To have Don Murdock, who was admittedly no student, languidly going back to the State U where he lived in a frate house that had a colored butler in a white coat—Don had mentioned him several times. To have Polly Sloane "returning to fashionable Huntington Park Seminary in Washington, D. C." Margaret had heard fabulous tales about oriental rugs and life-size statues in the drawing rooms and teas at embassies and trips to New York to see Maude Adams in Peter Pan. While Judy, lovely, smart, quivering little race horse of a Judy, was going to wait on tables at Jepson. "But it's so character-building."

LABOR DAY week end came at last, and the dreaded encounter had not taken place. Tomorrow all the summer people would be gone. Even tonight Judy was safe, for the Christian Endeavor Society was giving a tame little ice-cream social on the church lawn to raise money for the needed song books. None of the Lake Crowd came to such affairs. Don had condescendingly agreed to appear, but that was entirely due to Judy's charms and not because he was good Christian Endeavor material.

Margaret let herself relax. The lawn looked lovely with the tables set up under the strings of lighted Japanese lanterns. Dimes were rolling in for the thick white dishes of vanilla ice cream, accompanied by slabs of homemade cake. The hymn books were a certainty.

Judy was blithely everywhere at once. Margaret's heart contracted as she watched her in her best Princess Paulina dress, a soft yellow mull with set-in lace medallions and a black crushed velvet girdle.

Each of one's children wrenched one's heart in different ways, she thought. Like the one who had died. Oh, always she would hurt over that. The rest of the family could pick up and go on, but no matter what you said about time and grief it wasn't true for mothers. The hurt never left you; you carried it always.

When Judy had come along, she had been so sickly and gnomelike, so eager and plain that Margaret was always being torn in two over her. As she grew up, though, the rest of the world forgot about her childhood and noticed only that Judy stood out in a crowd. But Margaret had seen the transformation take place—the gnomelike look become elfin, the frailty a wiry slimness, the puppylike eagerness a lovely hunger for life. Tonight Margaret's heart knew its special Judy-ache of yearning protectiveness.

Judy's committee, plus Don, was working smoothly. Judy was an excellent manager, her mother noted in surprise. It is even more astonishing to a mother to find that her child is a leader than to find that she is beautiful.

To waste her on Jepson! She saw Don bend over, catching Judy by the arm. She could almost hear him say, "When can we clear out of this? When can I see you alone, Judy?"

He was plainly bedazzled; probably unwillingly so, Margaret suspected shrewdly. After all, Judy was a far cry from The Lake Crowd. She could imagine Don's mother saying over her steel-beaded velvet neckband, "I've no doubt they're very worthy people, Don, but a small-town preacher's family—really!" Doubtless the clergy part would be easier to swallow if Matthew were only a "rector."

She saw Judy laughingly shrug off Don's hold, pointing to a new group getting out of an auto. She marvelled at her own child's adroitness in handling this exigent young man. Where had she learned it? Certainly not from her, Margaret, who had recognized her love the instant she saw him and had thereupon thrown herself unblushingly at his head.

But Judy seemed to know just how to drive Don wild. Margaret let her-

TEMPLE BAILEY

is at her best when she tells you about Kitty, the wife who had to learn to love her husband more than she loved herself. Read

Me, A Housewife?

the first story written especially for our readers by this famous author, in the June issue of LIFE STORY. It's not just for war wives. It's for all wives, and any girl who ever daydreams about marrying the man she adores.

self dream for a moment in a pleasant worldly fashion about how nice it would be for Judy to marry into a diamond lavalier and a set of Spode and a sealskin jacket and a house and lot on Lindenwood Street. . .

Her attention centered on the newcomers, and her heart began to beat in slow horror. Someone was saying, "Don't rush ahead and eat all the ice cream, Polly."

POLLY! The Princess Paulina and The Lake Crowd, sightseeing, observing the quaint native custom of the ice-cream social. And Judy in the yellow mull!

She looked around frantically for the girl. Don, back of the ice-cream freezer, was jerking off his apron. Margaret saw him emerge from the screening lilacs with mingled bravado and embarrassment. So he *wasn't* sure of his place with The Lake Crowd.

At that instant Judy issued from the back door of the manse with a plate of fresh cake and headed straight for the tables, her yellow mull glowing in the light of the paper lanterns. Why had she let them string so many? It was light as day. If she could only manage to douse the one nearest The Crowd's table, Judy's dress might pass unnoticed.

Margaret did not stop to reason. She clambered onto an unsteady folding chair and a moment later had brought a shower of blazing paper down upon herself.

She heard Judy's anguished, "Mama, are you hurt?" as the girl stamped out the flames on the ground. Now she'd ruined everything! She might as well have turned a spotlight on Judy.

"Nice work," said one of The Crowd to Judy, a tall, gangling, freckled girl.

But Judy was staring down at a lace medallion on her dress, darkly smeared with sooty candle grease.

"And I was going to wear it at the Freshman Mixer!" she moaned. "You simply can't get the stuff out!"

The tall freckled girl peered at the dress too.

To Margaret it was like dreaming an old nightmare over again as she heard the girl say, "How odd! I had a dress with lace exactly like that once. And my mother always saves things after the dressmaker goes, so I'll bet she's got some left. I'll write and ask her—"

"Oh, thank you, Paulina," Margaret spoke up weakly—and could have bitten off her tongue the moment after.

"Paulina?" said Judy, deflected from her own misery. "You aren't Paulina Sloane? Whose dresses I've worn ever since I can remember? Not the Princess Paulina?"

The other girl stared back, equally incredulous. "You couldn't be one of Mama's Deserving Parkers! Not with a face like that. I always pictured you—"

"And I always pictured you—" said Judy wonderingly.

Margaret's very soul was cringing. To be known through the years as the Deserving so-and-sos!

Don was laughing hollowly. She

had a moment's near-sympathy for him. He wasn't finding these revelations palatable either. "What Polly means is, 'Your lace is familiar; haven't we met before?'"

The Crowd laughed. Don's *amour propre* healed quickly. With a single remark he had disclaimed the local young people and become a barnacle on The Lake Crowd.

"Hurry, Polly," he went on, surer of himself. "There's a moon for swimming. Let's clear out so all these busy little Christians can Endeavor to get their dishes washed."

The Crowd laughed even more loudly. Don was a card, a sketch. They moved off, leaving Judy standing very quiet in the shadows.

Margaret boiled inside. The detestable smart aleck. And she had thought him polite! The churchly slur was bad enough, but the hurt to Judy was worse. I could kill them all, she thought wildly. Don, Polly, The Lake Crowd. I wish I'd never heard of the Sloanes and their nasty, patronizing boxes or Don Murdock and his nasty, patronizing ways! She started toward Judy, but Judy had disappeared.

Then, with the perverse fate that is the lot of ministers' wives, everything interfered. . . . It was an hour and a half before she got away. She must find Judy even before she went for soda to put on her burned hand.

She rounded the house, noting a light in Judy's room. Was she up there crying her eyes out? What had she, Margaret, to say? Only the old clichés and platitudes about character building and holding your head up—pretty poor medicine for wounded pride and a broken heart.

She mounted the stairs. Voices came from Judy's room. She pushed open the door.

Two girls sat on the bed—arms clasped about knees, tongues wagging—in a jumbled sea of leather pillows, snapshots, felt pennants and chunks of homemade cake. Judy and Paulina Sloane. The Princess and a Deserving Parker!

Margaret gripped the door knob. "I didn't expect—I thought Paulina left with The Crowd and Don—" she began incoherently.

The tongues stopped momentarily. "Oh him! We had a time shaking him," grinned the homely Princess.

"Tiresome and sticky, isn't he?" agreed Judy cheerfully. "Mama, we've got a plan to talk over with you."

Margaret searched probingly for the light touch that hid a broken heart. Then she drew a long, relieved breath. There was no broken heart! Judy's apparent adroitness with Don had been simple boredom. Suddenly Judy's mother was happier than she had been in two months. "Tell me about your plan."

"Polly and I are going away to college together. She wants us to. We're going to be roommates."

"You don't mind, do you, Mrs. Parker? Judy and I—the minute we saw each other, we knew we'd jibe!" explained Polly eagerly.

Margaret sat down weakly on the matting-covered shirtwaist box. She'd been through almost too much for one night. Judy, going East to school with Paulina Sloane! But surely one's prayers didn't get answered so promptly and practically as this. For now Judy would have her "advantages" after all. This was different from accepting cast-off clothes, she assured herself hastily. If Mr. Sloane could endow whole colleges, why shouldn't he endow lovely, talented, brilliant Judy?

"I—I think it's very nice, but what will your father say?" she asked Polly. "We're waiting to get a call through to him now," Polly replied.

"It's pretty sudden," Margaret demurred dutifully. "You girls have only just met."

"But, Mama, after you've worn somebody's clothes for years and years, you're practically intimate!" pleaded Judy.

"Papa'll do anything, if I want it hard enough. It's the only way he can make up to me for giving me his features instead of Mama's," said Polly with filial cynicism. And in the hard little laugh that followed, Margaret learned that hearts ache quite as painfully in the fashionable suburbs of Philadelphia as in Jeffersonville.

THE telephone shrilled. Both girls catapulted down the stairs.

"Papa? Yes, I know it's midnight there, but this is terribly important. Please say yes. I want to go to college with Judy Parker. Remember? One of Mama's Deservings. Next week. I never wanted anything so much in my life. We're going to room together. It's a little coed school and, Papa, they have fun. And Judy's going to wait on table, and I'm going to spell her off. Judy's been telling me all about Jepson. It's what you are *inside* that counts there, not whether you have the Sloane nose and your coming-out party was a flop. Oh, Papa, please!"

Margaret went a little dizzy. Jepson! So Judy wasn't going East with Polly to the fashionable finishing school to learn how to enter a drawing room—at Mr. Sloane's expense. Instead, Judy had sold Polly on the idea of going to Jepson with *her*, while *she* waited on tables.

It was incredible. Judy must deeply believe all that about the dignity of labor, and the unimportance of material things, and the folly of false pride. All those preachments that she herself had never really accepted had soaked in and become a part of Judy.

Where was her handkerchief? She fished in vain inside her belt and the stiff cuffs of her shirtwaist. As the excited bawl downstairs announced that Mr. Sloane had succumbed, she thought humbly, "You mold them better than you are yourself!" and reaching out blindly, she wiped her eyes on a felt pennant that said Jepson College on it.

THE END

LIFE

The World's Happiest Couple

Continued from page 29

the great matinee idols was ending. From then on, eccentric mannerisms, incredible good looks, flashy clothes, overwhelming personal charm weren't going to be enough to make a star if the performer couldn't act in a convincing manner. But, as I say, I didn't know then that Pat O'Brien and Spencer Tracy symbolized the coming change in actor types.

AFTER that first meeting, I would run into them every week around Broadway. They were inseparable companions, shared a furnished room, pooled their money—when there was any—and their socks, shirts, suits and ties. Whichever one got up first was the best-dressed actor of that day.

Their middle-class Milwaukee families had been neighbors and Spence and Pat had grown up and gone to school together. They were in their late teens when World War I came to America and they enlisted together in the Navy, serving in the Great Lakes Naval Training Station until the Armistice.

As kids both had gone in for amateur theatricals. Pat wanted to try his luck on the professional stage after he got his honorable discharge. But his father, William Joseph Patrick O'Brien, had always treasured the dream that some day his son would become one of those brilliant, spell-binding Irish-American lawyers who have always made American criminal court trials scenes of verbal fire and drama.

To please his dad, Pat enrolled in the law course at Marquette University. Spencer Tracy went to Ripon University. Pat was enchanted by the picture Dad O'Brien drew of Counselor O'Brien electrifying courtroom crowds by his quick wit and oratory but, after the excitement of being in the Navy, he found those long evenings with heavy legal tomes pretty boring and dull.

What he liked about college was pitching for the baseball team and going in for football and the other sports. The best part of all was being in the dramatic club. He played in Charley's Aunt and other college shows.

After a long session with himself, Pat decided that was what he really wanted to do. He packed up his things and went home to Milwaukee.

"Telling the old fellow that I'd never be a Clarence Darrow was one of the toughest things I ever had to do in my life. Since I'd been a baby his good old Irish heart had been set on my be-

coming a lawyer, and maybe some day a judge. But he took it like a real father should. Just looked at me, and sighed, 'So that's the way it is with you, lad, eh?'

"And it was so typical of Dad that, once he was convinced I was determined to be an actor, he did everything he could to help me. He pointed out that the Wisconsin Legislature had recently passed a bill giving thirty dollars a month to war veterans who wanted to complete their educations. With this, he said, I could go to New York and study at some good dramatic school.

"I couldn't wait to get hold of Spence. We came to New York together, and enrolled in the Sargent School."

The pair lived on the joint \$60 a month they received from their native state. But after they were given their diplomas the subsidy ended; the going got tougher.

I watched Pat's good-natured face as he told me all about this. Years had passed since then.

Neither he nor Tracy had got very far—an engagement in a flop here, a stock engagement there. They were both nearing 30. That's pretty old to be still seeking success on the stage. I wondered how much longer these two nice guys could take it.

My guess was that Pat could take it longer than his friend. Pat didn't like the way he was forced to live—dingy furnished rooms, cafeteria meals, scrambling for jobs, smiling on an empty stomach. But emotionally he was equipped to roll with the punches.

Tracy, though basically a sound, square-shooting fellow, was more sensitive than Pat, more reserved, more inclined to brood.

The friendship was all that kept them afloat, kept the fires of their ambitions flaring in the face of every discouragement. Things were looking blackest for them when Pat got a job in the southern company of Broadway. The role was that of the detective, a short part but a good one. Actors seldom get famous playing in the out-of-town company of a hit. But it's a way to eat. And the producer of the hit, if you're good, is liable to call you into New York when he has a new play opening.

Pat was so good as Dan McCord, the detective, that Jed Harris, producer of Broadway, summoned him to play the same role in the Chicago company he was assembling. There Pat met Eloise Taylor and fell in love with her. It was a romance that started with a slap in the face.

I wasn't in Chicago when this meeting—the biggest thing that ever happened to Pat O'Brien in his eventful life—occurred, but Pat and Eloise have talked about it so much and so often that I sometimes feel as if I'd been an eye-witness.

TRY to visualize the great Erlanger Theater in Chicago—not brightly-lighted and crowded with eager, gay people—but with its thousands of seats empty, the vast place cold and dark except for one big unshaded light on

the stage. For this is a first rehearsal and only the cast and the crew are here.

One by one, the actors and actresses arrive. Summoned by telegraph, they've come in by train from all over the country, from New York, Hollywood and stock companies in half a dozen states. Only a few of them have met. They are cautious and suspicious of one another. They're in the show, but not yet sure—any of them—that they'll stay in.

The producer of Broadway is Jed Harris, young, tough, the man with the golden touch, the most exacting taskmaster in the theater. Each contract he signs has a two weeks' notice clause. You meet his high standards for acting, or out of the show you go.

Pat O'Brien swaggers on to the stage. He'd had to ask Jed Harris to wire traveling expenses, but looking at him you'd never know that he hasn't \$10 in his pocket. He's riding high. This isn't quite Broadway, but it's the next best thing. He's been given a raise. Forgotten are the missed meals with Spence, the perpetual worrying about the rent money.

As the stage manager hands around the parts, Pat looks the girls over with a speculative eye. His heart jumps as he sees one dark-haired girl. She's got a glow to her, can't be much more than 20.

Pat smiles. A long run in Chicago is guaranteed because the show has been a complete sell-out for months in New York. Then there will be a tour of the Midwest. And with a girl like that—Wow!

ALLEN JENKINS walks in. Pat shakes hands with him. He knows Jenkins from New York as the pal of a vaudeville hooper named Jimmy Cagney.

"Who's the girl, Jenk?" whispers Pat. Jenkins looks around, asks in that buzz-saw Brooklyn voice of his, "Which one? There's six of them."

"There's only one on the stage for my money," says Pat. "The brunette with the million-dollar chassis."

"Oh, her? I don't know her. I think she was in the original New York company."

Pat doesn't like that much. She looks regular, but she may look down upon him because he's from the southern company, while she opened with the play in the Big Town. One can never tell about an actress.

Before the day is over Pat gets Wallace Ford to introduce him to the girl, Eloise Taylor. "I wonder if you would have dinner with me?" Pat asks. "I hear you were in this show in New York. It's all new to me. Maybe you could tell me something about how the part of Dan McCord was played on Broadway."

Eloise hesitates—but only for a moment. Show business, she has learned, is full of wolves, but this looks like a nice, clean-cut Irishman. And she's the kind who loves to help somebody.

That night Pat spent six of his nine dollars in cash trying to impress Eloise with what a rich actor he

was. As she described in detail how Dan McCord was played on Broadway, he studied her coloring and bright intelligent eyes.

"Boy, you don't know how you're helping me," he said. "You see, the play—well, I never saw it, don't know anything about it—"

Just then, Wallace Ford, the actor who had introduced them, passed their table.

"Oh, by the way, Pat," he said, "I forgot to ask you about someone who worked with you in the southern company."

PAT winced as the big eyes of the girl opposite him got even bigger. "What southern company, Wally?" she asked.

"Gosh, didn't he tell you? He was the hit of Broadway in Atlantic!"

"You certainly must enjoy making a person feel like a fool," said Eloise angrily.

"You don't understand," explained Pat.

"Telling me you never saw the play!" "If you weren't Irish, Ford," growled Pat, "I'd push your face in."

Eloise picked up her bag and left. "Thanks for the dinner," she said, "and for the comedy routine."

Pat borrowed \$5 from Wallace Ford and sent her flowers. Eloise smiled at him next day during rehearsal. That night they found themselves alone in a backstage corner, and Pat did what a lot of other fellows have done under similar circumstances—he grabbed, putting his arms around Miss Eloise Taylor tightly and expertly.

Eloise was startled for a moment, then glared and tore herself out of his arms. "Now, honey, don't be like that," Pat was protesting when suddenly Eloise stepped back and slapped him.

"For the love of—" groaned Pat, then he looked at her—so small and defiant and angry—and laughed.

"I hate you, Pat O'Brien," she said. "I love you, Eloise Taylor," he told her.

And that was how it began. Pat didn't make any more passes during rehearsals. He worked on his part as he'd never worked before. He'd been good in Atlanta, but that wasn't good enough—not with Eloise watching.

They rehearsed day and night for weeks. Pat didn't say very much to Eloise. She began to wonder if perhaps she hadn't socked him too hard. After all, a kiss was just a kiss, and he hadn't even got a kiss.

The pace of the rehearsals and the tension increased as opening night drew near. There were the usual petty quarrels and temperamental outbursts but on opening night everything seemed to go well.

In restaurants, in hotel rooms all over Chicago, the company sat up, two or three in a group, to wait for the morning newspapers to come out with the reviews. They were raves.

With Wally Ford and Allen Jenkins, Pat read in the Chicago Tribune that morning:

... as to performances, all are done well, but one artist, Pat O'Brien, in the role of Detective Dan McCord, is as neatly cast as any mortal actor can be. ... Among the women who play the cabaret girls is an unusually pretty brunette named Eloise Taylor, who should go far. ...

As Pat read those words, he could only wonder what Miss Taylor would think of him. Years later, Eloise confessed that as she read that stage critic's praise early that morning in her hotel room she was wondering what Pat would think of her.

The next day everyone at the theater was jubilant. When Eloise saw Pat she said breathlessly, "I'm so happy that you got those wonderful reviews."

"Thanks," was all he said, for Pat had learned that women sometimes get deeply interested in you, if you let them wonder for awhile. But as he dressed for the performance, he kept thinking of the warm light that had been in Eloise's eyes as she congratulated him. And he cursed himself for being stupid in not having commented on the good notices she'd got also.

There was a turbulent scene in the last act of Broadway, and that night Pat accidentally shouldered Eloise out of his way with unnecessary roughness. He felt awful about it. As soon as he woke up next morning, he sent her a note:

Dear Miss Taylor:

I'm really not the hard-boiled flatfoot you must think me. Maybe you suspect, from this map of Old Erin that I call a face, that I really like to jostle girls around the stage. This is to say I'm sorry I bumped into you so hard last night. Unfortunately, I didn't have time to apologize. May I have the chance to do so at lunch today? Wally Ford and I are lunching at the Sherman and would like to have you join us. Will you scribble yes on this message and let the boy bring your answer?

Sincerely,
Pat O'Brien

Eloise smiled happily over the note, and sent back, by return messenger:

Dear Mr. O'Brien,
Alias Detective Dan,

When the arm of the law beckons, what can a girl do but come peacefully?

Eloise Taylor

What sort of impression Eloise made on Pat can be judged by the night letter he sent to Spencer Tracy in New York in answer to Spence's telegram of congratulation on Pat's Chicago success.

THANKS FELLA I AM NOW IN A HURRY TO GET FAMOUS HAVE MET THE ONE GIRL STOP YOU CANNOT HAVE THIS ONE STOP THANK HEAVEN YOU ARE A THOUSAND MILES AWAY LOVE PAT

I ran into Spence the day he received that.

"What are you looking so gloomy about?" I asked him.

He showed me the wire. "So what?" I asked him. "Isn't it good for a guy to fall in love?"

Tracy shook his head. "He's such a great guy, that O'Brien. A sentimental Irishman. How can I tell whether she's good enough for him? Don't like that 'one girl' stuff. Pat's worked so hard and so faithfully, it would be a shame if he got tangled up with a dame and got married just when he's beginning to get somewhere in show business."

"Maybe she's the right girl." "Perhaps, but it so seldom seems to happen that way with nice guys like Pat."

In the years since, Pat and I have had many a laugh over Spence Tracy's idea that Eloise mightn't be good enough for his pal. Pat would be the first one to tell you she is not only good enough but too good for him or any other man.

I think he's right. Pat learned all there was to know about Eloise during the long, happy weeks of the Chicago run and Midwestern road tour of Broadway. Everything he learned he liked.

A DES MOINES girl, after graduating from high school she joined the Princess Players stock company there, playing a maid and a chorus girl and other bits in various shows.

In between seasons she worked as private secretary to M. J. Gibson, Attorney General of Iowa, and also was secretary to the late United States Senator Kimberly.

But the pull of the stage was too strong for her. Such excellent young actors as Ralph Bellamy, Frank McHugh and Robert Armstrong had worked in stock with her. She was with the Clement Walsh Players when Ralph Bellamy went to Kentucky to form a stock company there.

Eloise had made a verbal agreement, a tentative one, with Bellamy to join his stock company, but when he sent for her she decided to stay in Des Moines. Bellamy, it seemed, didn't have enough money to send her railway fare. Ralph got pretty sore and threatened to sue her. The O'Briens have a good laugh over that each time they meet Ralph nowadays.

In 1923, Rudolph Valentino, touring the country in a series of personal appearances, named Eloise the prettiest girl in Iowa. Before coming to Broadway in the big hit she'd also played several seasons of stock at Sarnac Lake, New York. At the time Pat met her, Eloise's career was really just beginning, just as his was.

Pat was walking on air all during the Chicago run. He'd look into the mirror in his hotel room, and say aloud, "Holy St. Patrick! She likes me! Me! It's the only dopey thing about her."

And when he heard that the first stop of the road tour was going to be Milwaukee, he went wild with joy. He was always immensely proud of his

parents and now Eloise was going to meet them!

By the last week in Chicago he was sending notes to her hotel room by bellboy that read like this:

Dear Eloise:

Only six more nights in Chicago before we go on the road. Please reserve this evening—I won't take "no" for an answer! Found a very interesting spot called the Russian Inn, with real Russian music. You would like it.

I tried to phone you to thank you for coming to church with me yesterday, but there was no answer, so I'm scribbling this. When the amber light streamed down through that window onto your head, I sort of choked up. Couldn't tell you about it. Forgive a sentimental Mick!

Sincerely,
Pat

Pat waited in his room for two hours until the answer came.

Dear Pat:

I'm dreadfully sorry I can't make it tonight, as some friends from Milwaukee drove down and I promised to dine with them after the show. Besides, I haven't had time to have my hair washed, and look terrible. Can you make it Tuesday instead?

Eloise

P.S. I'm a bit sentimental myself. Thanks for choking up!

It doesn't take much imagination to know what that letter did to Pat. He read it over and over. Who were those mysterious "friends" from Milwaukee? Could one of these "friends" be some fellow, maybe a guy with plenty of money, who had long been in love with her?

Then he'd think of the last lines—"I'm a bit sentimental myself. Thanks for choking up."

Could that mean what it seemed to mean? That she was falling in love with him?

Pat couldn't decide. But he learned the answer a few night later, on that unforgettable Tuesday, at the Russian Inn, when he asked her to marry him, not right away, of course, but when he'd become important in the theater.

What her answer did to him can be seen by reading the love letter Pat wrote to her that night, after getting home from the show.

Darling:

Just one more good night—and a good morning too, for you will read this when the chirpy yellow "sparrow" of yours, wakes you up and the sun, lucky guy, beams at you through the Chicago grime. Good night, darlin'.

And if I sit here a few minutes, getting ink on my fingers and staring at a chromo of Killarney's lakes, maybe I'll finally realize that it's true, and that I'm not dreaming, and am actually the



Look Backward, Angel

EINSTEIN had a theory of relativity. So have we. One everybody can understand. A girl only looks as good coming, to her public facing her, as she does going, to the rear guard back of her. Do you have a rear guard—or do you need one?

Q. What does the man who's following you look at first?

A. Your ankles—honest, even the nicest ones!

(Q. Personal: How about yours? Are they trim and slim or are they draped in the folds of insecure stockings?)

Q. Where is a lady apt to be lumpy?

A. You guessed it! It's that famous French word, *derriere*.

(Q. Personal: Ever try sitting on a hard floor, feet stretched out straight, knees straight, and "walking" on your you-know-what the length of the room and back?)

Q. What do Servicemen hate, loathe and despise?

A. Crooked seams!

(Q. Personal: Do you remember to straighten them last thing before every personal appearance? And do your hose supporters really work?)

Q. What kind of hem line does the WPB—and everybody else—frown on?

A. Those that dip in the back.

(Q. Personal: Are you guilty of wearing a new dress without checking the hem?)

Q. What kind of slip doesn't pass—night or day?

A. A slip that shows.

(Q. Personal: Do all your slips measure $\frac{1}{4}$ " shorter than all your dresses?)

Q. What is the worst kind of heel anyone could have in the family?

A. A run-down heel.

(Q. Personal: Do you check every pair of precious shoes once a month? Do you rush every diminishing lift to the nearest shoe repair shop?)

Q. What has haste to do with your waist?

A. Too little time means a waistline with too little fit.

(Q. Personal: When your blouse and skirt meet in the middle, is it exactly at your middle?)

Q. What does everybody else call those white flakes on your shoulders?

A. Dandruff! Not dry scalp!

(Q. Personal: Do you keep your hair and scalp free of flaking with daily brushing and a weekly shampoo? Do you have the clothes-brush habit?)

Q. What kind of split has nothing to do with acrobatics?

A. A split in the seam of an armhole.

(Q. Personal: Do you go over every seam to make sure there's no untidy giving?)

Q. What's important about today's "headlines"?

A. They're smoothly groomed—back and front, in crisp curls or sleek swirls.

(Q. Personal: Do you remember to put up straggly back ends in curlers or bobbie pins—every night? Do you use your mirror to get a full back view every day?)

Q. What does elbow room mean?

A. Room for improvement, no doubt!

(Q. Personal: Do you keep yours soft with scrubbing and lots of cream?)

With a score of 90 you might pass. But if you want a whizz-bang future, give some thought to that which goes behind you. When it comes to personal appearance, *hindsight* is every bit as good as *foresight*.

luckiest Irishman ever blessed by Saint Patrick.

Even these hotel walls don't look the same: Those yellow stains are the veins in the marble of my castle; this rickety table is a marble-topped desk and it's covered with contracts from Important People. That's what love does to a Harp!

Because now I've got to be a success, and make those castles in the air come down to earth. For when we are married, colleen, we aren't going to be frying hamburgers over gas jets in back halls. . . . I refuse to ask you to share a life like that.

When you said "yes" tonight at the Russian Inn, all I could say was "Gee, Eloise!" That must have sounded awfully dumb. I should have had something better to say than that—at least I might have said "You've made me the happiest man in the world!"—which would just be a mild way of expressing my feelings.

But you understood, and there were lights in your eyes that didn't come from the candle on the table, and there was something in your voice that was sweeter than the wild music of the Cossacks. May those lights always be there, and the music, is the prayer of

Your Pat

I WAS at the railway station with Spencer Tracy several months later when Eloise and Pat came into New York from the road tour of Broadway.

"The guy has gone nuts!" Spence kept saying. "Getting engaged when he hasn't got a quarter or a job. The girl can't have much sense either to get tangled up with an out-of-work actor, even if he is the sweetest guy in the world."

It would have been funny, if his worrying about Pat hadn't been so sincere. Spence had asked everybody in show business about Eloise. He'd got the same answer everywhere. She was a grand person, easy-going, intelligent, gifted and beautiful. But Spence had to see for himself.

They got off the train and came up the ramp, Pat carrying Eloise's pet canary's cage.

"Look at the clown," muttered Tracy. "That is my pal you're seeing. If I ever dreamed that rough and ready guy, Pat O'Brien, would—"

But then they were with us, shaking hands, and he had to shut up. Certainly Eloise Taylor had magic in her personality. She hadn't been with us ten minutes before she had Spencer Tracy in her pocket completely enchanted; Spence, who had come down to the station expecting the worst. From that first meeting he could see that she was all Pat had written, sweet, smart, lovely.

But bad sailing was ahead. Success in the theater is seldom easy or sudden. Jobs that seemed certainties for both Pat and Eloise folded

up over-night. There were long periods of unemployment for both of them, then months of separation when Pat and Eloise got work with stock companies in cities hundreds of miles apart.

Dozens of times Pat would say to me, "I've just got to make good, kid. I suppose Eloise would marry me on a button, but what good would that do? She deserves the best there is and that's what I'm going to give her."

I think the ebb of his spirits came a Christmas or two later when he was playing in a Baltimore stock company with Spence and Frank McHugh. I was in Baltimore myself that Christmas Eve on an assignment for a newspaper syndicate. "They're paying us off down here with uppercuts," moaned Pat.

He didn't mind that nearly so much as the fact that Eloise couldn't be with him on Christmas Eve. She was in St. Paul, Minnesota, working for another stock company.

"How long is a beautiful girl like that going to wait for a penniless, luckless ham like me?" he demanded. "There's a guy out there in St. Paul with plenty of potatoes. His name is Al Bridge, he's manager of her troupe, and one of my friends in the company—maybe he isn't such a good friend—says this Bridge is nuts about Eloise."

"I can't hate him for that. He shows good judgment. But if I don't get a break soon—"

He reached into his pocket, and pulled out a letter from Eloise.

You're going to come in a winner, Pat," she had written, so don't get blue. I'll be waiting for your next letter. It's difficult to be so far away—thousands of miles—wondering if you love your Eloise.

Pat watched me smile as I read that. "Pretty sweet, eh?" he asked.

"I don't think this Al Bridge rates any worrying from you."

"I hope not," he agreed. "She's everything to me."

None of us had much money that Christmas but we pooled our dimes and quarters and had a little party at Mrs. Sparrow's famous Baltimore theatrical boarding house. Edna Hibbard and the late William (Stage) Boyd were also in the stock company. They joined the party with Frank McHugh and Spence Tracy and Pat and me.

I couldn't help wondering that night what the people who had applauded these performers at the theater that evening, who thought of them as rich and glamorous people, would have thought of their Christmas Eve party. All we had to eat was doughnuts, coffee and bologna sandwiches. Pat bought a pitiful little Christmas tree with his last 50 cents at the five-and-dime store. And all of us, Catholics and non-Catholics alike, went to midnight mass. I saw Pat praying and knew that he was asking God to give him the strength and wisdom to get what he needed in life to make him happy—Eloise, a home, and children around them.

A few weeks later Pat got an offer from a stock company in his own home town, Milwaukee, and went out there, happy as a rabbit in a lettuce field. It meant being with his parents again and, what was even more important, being much nearer to Eloise, whom he hadn't seen for months.

But in Milwaukee Pat chafed with impatience to be with Eloise who was now in Duluth where her stock company — hers and Al Bridge's — had moved. His chance to see her came when he heard of a local business man who wanted someone to drive him through Minnesota. Pat went to see the man, told him he was the best motor driver since Ralph de Palma, and got the job.

In Duluth, Pat rushed backstage. Eloise was delighted to see him. They encountered the redoubtable Mr. Bridge as they were leaving the theater.

"Meet my fiance, Pat O'Brien," said Eloise.

Pat told me later he didn't know whether to shake hands or punch his rival in the nose. As soon as they got to a restaurant, Pat proposed that they get married at once.

"Don't be silly," said Eloise. "If we had any money, I'd yell 'yes' but—"

"I know," agreed Pat, "we don't want one of those hall-bedroom marriages. Only what about this guy, Al Bridge?"

"What about him?" laughed Eloise. "You're entirely too modest, darling."

"Double-talk?" asked Pat.

"Oh honey, you're marvelous," she said. "Do you think that, after having once been kissed by the one and only Pat O'Brien I could so much as look at another man?"

"Well—but—" stammered the highly pleased Pat, "time is passing. How long will you wait?"

She patted his hand, kissed him, "Is it hinting you are now, Mr. O'Brien, that I'm getting to be such an old hag that if I don't hurry up no one will marry me?" she asked, teasingly.

"Not at all," Pat told her.

"Look, dear," she said, "I'm very serious about this. I believe in you. I know you'll make good. I'll wait—don't ever worry about that. There's nobody else. There will be nobody else. I happen to love you, Mr. O'Brien, and it's not a thing I take lightly."

Pat kept telling the man who owned the car that it needed repairs, in order to prolong their stay in Duluth as long as possible. But the day finally came when he had to say good-by for awhile to Eloise.

IN a few weeks he was back in New York, looking for work again. Spence was rehearsing for a grim show called *The Last Mile*, in which he had the leading role, that of a killer in the death house, who leads a prison break. It looked like the opportunity Spence had spent years waiting for.

"If you'd only get a smile from Lady Luck, wouldn't things be swell though?" Spence kept asking Pat. And oddly enough Pat's break was not

long in coming. The first step towards lasting success was an engagement in Cleveland, playing the hard-boiled managing editor in Ben Hecht's and Charles MacArthur's rowdy newspaper play, *The Front Page*.

The only bad part of that was that just as he was leaving New York, Eloise was coming in, having obtained a job in a picture at Paramount's studio in Astoria, New York.

But Pat was so sensational in *The Front Page* that a New York manager made him a good offer to open in New York in a melodrama called *The Up and Up*. Pat played a gangster.

THERE was a great re-union with Eloise in New York. I dropped in at rehearsals one day to see Pat at work. At once it was apparent that a new quality had entered his work. Pat O'Brien, in my estimation, had always been a good actor, but for that first important role he had developed an intensity, a seriousness of purpose that hadn't seemed to be in him before.

I took Eloise to the opening. Before the first act was half over she was sitting on the edge of her seat, gripping the arms of the chair.

"Why, he's great!" she whispered to me. "I hardly know this man to whom I've been engaged for three years. He can become a star, and that's something I never dared believe before."

We listened to people in that first night crowd—the toughest audience in the world, Broadway calls it, and rightly—and Eloise beamed with pride. I felt pretty good myself.

"Who is this Pat O'Brien?" we heard one critic say. "Never heard of him before."

"Oh, he's been around a long time," an agent told him. "Played stock around the country for years."

The critic laughed. "And you fellows keep wondering what's wrong with the theater? That man, that O'Brien, must be almost thirty. And this is his first big role."

Everything we heard was like that: People asking who Pat was and saying how realistically he was playing his part. The three of us sat up together in Pat's hotel room until the morning newspapers came out. Pat and Eloise almost cried with joy when a bellboy brought those early editions up and we rushed to read the criticisms. The New York reviewers had gone mad about Pat O'Brien's acting.

Here is a line or two from what Walter Winchell wrote in the *Mirror*:

... not until Pat O'Brien electrifies the theater with his first appearance in *Act I* is *The Up and Up* good. He is a grand entertainer, this O'Brien fellow, so much like most of the *Underworld* master minds in New York that at least one spectator felt he was among the racketeering giants. . . .

Pat and Eloise danced for joy. Because all of the newspaper criticisms were like that. The show, which wasn't any too good in itself, had proved a personal triumph for Pat.

"Now I can tell you, darling!" said

The Power of Suggestion



Vincent Price

"MAYBE I won't make good, but I'll take a try at it anyhow."

Do you ever say that to yourself when opportunity comes knocking? If you do, then stop it—at once. Why, you're sunk before you start. You're suggesting failure to yourself, which is the surest way to defeat.

Suggestion is the greatest of all morale building-uppers or pull-downers. If you ding-dong a suggestion to yourself or to others, eventually it takes root in the mind and molds the future.

I've had proof after proof. The first was when I was a mere lad. A teacher in a Midwestern private school put across his suggestions to a pupil.

"You've a brain. Use it," he constantly said to a mentally sluggish boy called "Dumbbell" by the class. "Tell yourself you can and then get to work. You'll make your grades, you'll see."

And how that boy perked up! Gradually he lost the conviction that he was stupid, overcame the force of that poisonous nickname. Later he passed his exams creditably.

It was then that I adopted suggestion for my own. It became a staff to help me on my way. *I can do it. I can do it.* The words suggested by that wise teacher still echo in my mind. I'll always be grateful to him. In school I hated mathematics, but I gritted my teeth, applied the seat of my pants to my chair and conquered algebra prob-

lems. I conquered back somersaults and high dives by self-confidence and constant practice. Finally, I embarked upon my career with suggestion.

I come of a non-theatrical family, so my blunt announcement, "I'm going to be an actor," was a family starter.

"What makes you think you can act?" was the only comment of my parents.

"I can. I know I can!" The words almost automatically uttered themselves. "I want to be an actor more than anything else in the world. I know it's right for me and I'm right for it."

We got together, the theater and I. I kept telling myself, "I can do it," but I soon found out that the powers that be have to be convinced that they want you. Chance must be grabbed and wrestled with, especially in the theater.

Grand, glorious chance came to me. That great artist, Helen Hayes, in search of an "Albert" for her "Victoria," believed I was right for the role. Her belief in me suggested belief in myself. I had the chance, a dazzling, breath-taking one, and I surely wrestled with it. I did the best I could.

The Power of Suggestion! Believe you me, even the Fates can be affected by it. Here is a true case in point.

Once, during the rehearsal period for "Angel Street," all five of the members of the cast, talking together, admitted that the success of the play was vitally important to them. So one night the leading lady, Judith Evelyn, and I decided that instead of studying we would walk through Central Park and suggest to the Fates that they make "Angel Street" a success for all concerned.

"It will be a success. It must be a success. The public will like it," each of us mentally repeated.

The Fates took the hint. It was a great success.

You can talk yourself into failure or into success. When you say to yourself, "I can," the chances are that you will accomplish what you want to. Prove it for yourself, as I have proved it.

BY VINCENT PRICE

Pat as he kissed Eloise for the hundredth time.

"Tell me what?"

"A big Hollywood director came backstage to see me between the acts. He's Lewis Milestone, who directed *All Quiet* on the Western Front. He said a lot of nice things about my work, and asked me what I'd done. I said I'd worked in *The Front Page* and in *Broadway*. I didn't say I wasn't in the New York companies, figured if he wanted to hire me he'd find that out."

Pat looked so guilty when he said this that both Eloise and I couldn't help laughing at him. "What's so funny?" he asked suspiciously.

"Pat, Pat! You've been in show business so long—and yet you look as though you'd stolen your father's watch just because you let a Hollywood director get the impression you're more important than you really are. I would have killed you if you'd volunteered the information that you'd been in the Chicago company of *Broadway* and played *The Front Page* in Cleveland only!"

"That's very little blarney for an Irishman," I chimed in.

But he still had that guilty look on his face. That's the way Pat has always been. So honest it almost hurts.

Pat and Eloise thought they were all set to be married. He was getting

a good salary in the play and Eloise had a stock engagement in upstate New York.

Overnight, the bottom dropped out of the pretty little dream they'd fashioned for themselves. Pat's play, *The Up and Up*, failed. He went into a highly-touted play, the late William Bolitho's *Overture*. That also lasted only a few weeks.

Pat found himself once more sitting in the Lambs Club, an out-of-work actor. Pat is as loose with money as most actors. That winter he didn't even have an overcoat. One night when he wanted to go to Albany to see Eloise he had to borrow a coat from Matt Briggs, a fellow-performer.

I saw him often. Eloise's letters, full of love and comfort, kept him going.

But the one thing Pat couldn't bear to think of was that he had been forced to pawn the beautiful engagement ring he had bought Eloise in his first flush of triumph.

"If I ever get into the money," he'd say, "she's going to have everything money can buy. She's waited long enough, and deserves the best."

To his delight Spence had made a big hit in *The Last Mile* and had been signed to a Hollywood contract. Jimmy Cagney had also clicked in a show called *Penny Arcade*. The movie moguls had snatched Cagney, together with the girl in the show, a blonde named Joan Blondell.

"They're not leaving this O'Brien behind," Pat would say grimly. The most endearing thing about Pat was his lack of jealousy. He just couldn't feel any resentment because his pals were on the trail that led to the big Hollywood gold mine.

"I only hope they handle Spence and Jimmy right," he would say. "They can become two of the biggest stars in Hollywood—if they get the right parts in the right pictures."

"Haven't you heard anything from Milestone?" I asked one day.

Pat shrugged. "Not a word. I guess he's forgotten me."

When things looked blackest, life began to hum with hope. Pat was down to his last \$11 the day a bookie, for whom he'd once done a favor, tele-

phoned him at his rooming house. "Your troubles are over," he said. "Come over to see me."

That's all the bookie would tell Pat over the phone. Pat went to see the man who whispered, "I got a sure thing in the sixth at Pimlico. How much money you got?"

"Eleven dollars," Pat told him dubiously.

"Give me ten of it and I'll—"

"Now wait a minute!" protested Pat. "I've never bet on a horse before."

EDDIE seemed hurt. "Don't you trust my judgment, pal? Anyway, what can you do on \$11? Instead of being hungry three days from now you'll be hungry tomorrow in the remote event this sure thing turns out to be a phony."

That was sound Broadway logic and Pat understood it. Eddie said he was putting \$50 of his own on this horse, a nag named Zaan. That afternoon the two of them sat in the place where Eddie worked, listening to the account of the sixth race at Pimlico, as it came over the telephone direct from the track.

"Princess Pat takes the lead," said the voice from Pimlico. "Now it's Ten-strike making a bid—he's dropping back—it's Princess Pat again at the quarter—at the far turn Gay Daughter is moving up—into the stretch—"

Pat felt a little ill. Where was Zaan, the long shot on which his money was riding? Nervously, he fingered the lonely dollar bill in his pocket.

"... it's a jam, with Princess Pat leading by a nose—and out of the clouds—Zaan—and Zaan wins!"

Pat all but kissed Eddie. He collected \$378, the most money he'd ever had in his life at one time—and rushed over to the Lambs Club. The first thing he did was write the good news to Eloise.

How would you like to have that winter coat you said you couldn't afford? How would you like to dine at the Waldorf, on roast duckling with all the trimmings? How would you—

He was interrupted by a telephone

call. The great Gilbert Miller, prince of Broadway stage producers, wanted to see him right away about a part in a new play he was putting on.

Pat shoved the unfinished letter into his pocket and went to Mr. Miller's office. The part was a good one, in Philip Barry's *Tomorrow and Tomorrow*.

Mr. Miller asked Pat to read some lines from the play. Five minutes later, the actor was signing a contract at \$300 a week!

That afternoon as I walked along Broadway I saw a familiar figure. It was Pat—and he was inarticulate with happiness.

"At last we can get married. I'm going nuts! Eloise is up in Worcester, Massachusetts. I've got her ring out of hock. I want her to come down and marry me right away. I'm sending for my parents. I'm—gosh, I can hardly think."

Within three days Eloise and Pat's parents were in New York. Eloise bought new clothes and selected a wedding ring. One night Pat went back to his hotel—he had moved out of the rooming house the day he won the \$378—to find a telegram:

UNDERSTAND YOU HAVE SIGNED WITH GILBERT MILLER FOR NEW PLAY. ADVISE AT ONCE IF DEAL IS DEFINITE. HAVE PICTURE FOR YOU. WILL CALL BY PHONE TONIGHT. LEWIS MILESTONE.

We all congregated in Pat's room that night—Eloise, Pat's mother and father and me—to wait for that all-important telephone call.

"Wouldn't it murder you?" Pat kept demanding. "When I was broke and out of work, things like this never happened. And now—"

The phone rang. Pat leaped for it. "Yes, this is Pat O'Brien—yes—I think so—yes, Mr. Milestone—I will." We were clustered around him but that's all we could hear. When he hung up, he sighed.

"Darling, don't keep us in suspense," said Eloise. "What is the deal?"

"I'm afraid to tell you. You'll think I'm lying, exaggerating Harp. Seven-

Make=Believe Marriage

Janet had waited to hear from Basil for many lonely months. But when word came it was from someone else—to tell her that this man she'd loved was dead. And so she entered into one of the strangest marriages a girl ever chose to make. Here is one of the most exciting stories to come out of Palm Beach, written for the June LIFE STORY by

NINA WILCOX PUTNAM

fifty a week and a seven-year contract!"

"Go on with you," cried Dad O'Brien. "Mom and I always knew this would happen one day."

I looked from one to another of those three people whom Pat loved best in all the world. Without them—without his parents and the girl he loved—could he have kept on, taking disappointments and years of setbacks in his stride? I didn't think so.

THERE was one complication to be straightened out before Pat could sign for pictures. He was obligated to do the play for Gilbert Miller, and Lewis Milestone wanted him at once in Hollywood to play a leading role in the film version of *The Front Page*. Mr. Miller balked at letting Pat go until Howard Hughes, who was producing the picture, offered him \$10,000 to release the actor.

"This will finance the play," laughed Miller as he told Pat about the deal. "You're the first actor who ever brought me enough money to put on a show."

The crazy things that followed are amusing only because they turned out happily. Pat and Eloise rushed out to Hollywood so quickly that they didn't have a chance to be married in New York. They had to wait until they reached California. And at the last moment, Pat discovered that in the excitement he had attended to everything but getting enough money for traveling expenses. He had to wire Hughes, who sent it promptly.

And when they reached Hollywood they discovered that Pat had been hired to play Hildy Johnson, the reporter, in *The Front Page*, instead of the role he had played on the stage—that of Walter Burns, the managing editor. That part had already been assigned to Adolphe Menjou when the O'Briens reached the Coast.

But Pat was given tests for the reporter part and proved so sensational that Hughes, a painstaking movie producer, gave him his big chance anyway.

The worst surprise of all in Hollywood was when Pat discovered that the seven-year contract that he'd expected would set him financially for life was a seven-year contract in name only.

Every six months there were "options." This meant that Hughes could dispense with Pat's services at will. Hughes did drop him after six months or a year because he had no more pictures he wanted to make.

There followed a troubled year or two for the O'Briens. Despite his spectacular performance in the film version of *The Front Page*, no studio signed him up on a term contract.

Pat made one picture for MGM, then worked in independent productions of little merit. The small independent field is usually the stopoff for actors on their way to oblivion.

However, in Pat's case, it didn't turn out that way. Warner Brothers signed him and he was with that company for seven years, starring with Jimmy Cag-

ney and other ranking stars in the forty-seven features he made.

"Making that many pictures is not only a strain on your vogue with the public," Pat says, "but it's a test of physical endurance. I think that I made more pictures per year during those seven years than any other important player in Hollywood."

Pat agrees that some of those pictures were awful. I remember asking him in Hollywood, about six years ago, what his favorite movie role was.

"I'll tell you," he said. "Every Wednesday at noon I go up to a little grilled window on the lot. I say to the man behind the window, 'Pat O'Brien,' and he pushes out a white envelope with a check for a ridiculous amount of money. Doing that every Wednesday is my favorite role."

I guess this answers the question of whether Hollywood has changed Pat much. He's the same gay, good-hearted modest Pat who never forgets how tough his early years were.

You've probably seen his really great pictures, Knute Rockne, All-American, Oil for the Lamps of China, and more lately, *The Iron Major*, not forgetting *Angels With Dirty Faces*, which he made with Cagney and Anne Sheridan.

Today Pat is in his early forties and sitting on top of that crazy little world called Hollywood. He works hard, and he'll probably be abroad entertaining our troops when you read this.

On his first trip to North Africa he wrote eight letters to be read by Eloise to the children, Mavourneen, 12; Sean, 7; and Kevin, 2; one letter for each Sunday he would be away from home.

The Sunday I was there, in the beautiful colonial house Eloise and Pat built for themselves in Brentwood, he and Eloise had just returned from a tour of the army and navy hospitals in this country.

"Eloise loved entertaining again," he said. "We traveled with the Harry Browns. They're old vaudevillians and the parents of Tom Brown. The trip was a great thing but it made me a little sick to see those kids who'd been crippled and blinded in the war."

"We found out a strange thing. What those youngsters liked best was having Eloise talk about our home life. She told a story about Mavourneen going to church one Sunday. We observed that she was reading her prayer-book with great zeal, and were pleased at her piety. It was only when the church services were over that we discovered that inside the prayer-book she had concealed a comic book."

"Another story of Eloise's that the youngsters were crazy about was about Sean. We sent him to military school. One Sunday I tried to show him how we had drilled during the last war. 'Oh, that was the last war, Dad!' he said. 'This is the way they're drilling in this war.' He insisted on drilling me all day, had us all march into the dining room for lunch, and so forth."

Almost alone among the Hollywood stars, Pat would rather talk about his family—tell such stories as the above

—than about his adventures as an actor.

Eloise is president of the local AWWVS. She is so deeply engrossed in home front war activities that Pat found it necessary to install an extra phone in the house for her.

"People are forever asking me how Pat and I manage to stay married in Hollywood," she said when Pat left the room for a moment. "You know, he was almost thirty when we married. He'd been around all he wanted to before he settled down. I think that's one of the reasons he is content to stay settled down now."

That day I walked through the charming house with Pat. He showed me his leather-lined dressing room, the sun-drenched rooms for the children, the swimming pool and all the rest.

"It's all like a dream come true," he said.

I think that Eloise is wrong about the reason why they've made Hollywood's happiest marriage. The real reason, I believe, is because, having had to wait for their happiness, they appreciate it fully.

Eloise gave up her career soon after she went to Hollywood with Pat. I'd often wondered about that, but hesitated to speak about it. The last time I saw her, however, I mentioned it.

"Oh, I did hate to give it up," she said. "Some of the women out here may manage both a career and a marriage with children, but I saw that I had to choose between being an actress or a wife. To me, it was more important to be Pat O'Brien's wife. And after the first baby came, of course, I was so busy being a mother that I didn't have much time to worry about the career I wasn't having."

I DIDN'T have to ask Eloise whether she'd regretted that choice. I just had to watch the way she looked at Pat and the children and I had the answer.

As I was leaving the house, Pat said, "I know you're busy but if you don't go to see my mother before you leave Hollywood, I'll never speak to you again. She's a part of this love story. If I hadn't had a mother like that maybe I wouldn't have appreciated Eloise when I met her. And say—I forgot to show you the new picture of Dad that Mom dug up."

He made me go back to the guest house. He pointed out the picture, "There, Charlie, is the greatest guy who ever lived," he said of his dead father.

Next time you see Pat O'Brien in the picture you might wonder if that's why you admire him, because he has a mother you have to go to see if you're going to remain his friend, and a father he remembers as "the greatest guy in the world."

The senior O'Briens were just simple people. They never got famous, but their son did—and he and Eloise have stayed "just folks" despite all the fame and money that Hollywood has showered on them.

THE END

What Do You Call Love, Mr. Ivor?

Continued from page 33

"It's a lie," said Jim.

Tiny grinned, then sobered. He looked at an antique glass paperweight instead of at Jim's eyes. "By the way," he remarked carefully, "Starr's out there. With this captain."

Jim Ivor just nodded, sitting there with his hands flat on his desk, his feet flat on the floor and his eyes unwinking on Tiny's heavy, florid face.

"I wouldn't doubt she'll slip in for a few words," Tiny ventured.

"Oh?" said Jim.

"The ring will have to be covered with tape for blackouts. Or maybe they could see it in a searchlight battery."

Jim said nothing.

Tiny nodded to the paperweight. "Well, just thought I'd tell you." He cleared his throat. "I'll be in the check-room if you want me . . . look things over there. . . ."

HE WENT out with his cat walk, and Jim sat just the way he'd left him while the desk clock slid its hands ahead a notch or two.

That was nice of Tiny—and of Mick—to let him know ahead of time. They'd guessed long ago, of course, as had Jules, the size of Starr's displacement in his life. She was there like a great rock clogging the bottom of a deep well, too far down to dredge for, too heavy to pry out. She'd be there forever probably—the reason for his poker face, his chilling reticence.

The phone rang. Jim picked it up mechanically and talked mechanically, thoughts still on distant, long days spent with Starr while her battered spirit healed again in the strong slow current of his love—which, with all the will in the world, she was unable to return.

"Yes, this is Ivor speaking."

Party for ten tomorrow night. Special service. And it would be much appreciated if Mr. Ivor would join the table for just a minute or two. He would? Splendid! The name in which the reservation was to be made was known to everybody in New York.

As Jim set the phone down the door opened. Without turning or looking around, he said, "Hello, Starr."

For he didn't have to see Starr to know when she entered a room. The air changed; it took on meaning; everything took on meaning. And there were increasingly frequent times now when ordinary living had no meaning for Jim Ivor.

He felt her hand on his shoulder for an instant, and then he turned a little

and gazed up at her. She leaned lightly up against his desk, hands on its edge, straight arms supporting forward curving shoulders.

"Some one petitioning the Ivor smile?" she said.

Jim nodded.

She looked wonderful. She looked marvelous. It had been—let's see—thirteen years since their kid days in Chicago. The almost childish slimmness of her dancer's body was long since gone, replaced by fluid curves. Hers was a flawless, healthy skin and a full beauty such as any deb would envy but could never emulate without a few more years of living. No doubt some of this came from dancing, but most of it was—just Starr. She was that way. She'd always been that way.

"You've come up since Cicero Avenue days," said Starr, sending a lazy, hazel glance toward the phone. "Big men call you. Rich women beam on you. Millionaires and celebrities say, 'Hello, Jim,' 'Hi, Jim,' hoping they can go home and tell their friends, 'Jim Ivor—Club Thirty, you know—stopped to say hello to me the other night.'"

She laughed, and the sound of it could still disturb the deep well of Jim's life to its depths, just as it had thirteen years ago. Would any one guess a man could be such a fool as to carry a torch all those years? Well, perhaps not, if the man in question was Jim Ivor. Perhaps no one—except Tiny and Mick and Jules, of course—would ever guess if he were just restrained enough, hard-boiled, impersonal, unsmiling enough.

He said, "You've come up some yourself."

Starr raised her straightened arms enough to shrug. She wore cream white, plain and unadorned. She usually did. It brought out the amber pink of her flesh, made the upswart tawny hair seem more fresh and crisp. This evening gown flowed softly downward from the V at her bosom. Above were diminutive satin sleeves like tiny capes.

"You're at the St. Giles now, aren't you?" Jim said. "How is it? Good?"

"You know my dancing, Jim. It's adequate."

"You always did whittle yourself down instead of building yourself up," Jim remarked.

The lovely shoulders moved again.

"I don't kid myself, that's all. I don't let others kid me, either. Not since—" Starr stopped, and Jim knew that after all the years this thing could still pierce deep, just as after all the years her laugh, her walk, her presence could send electric messages along his nerves. "I'm good enough to get by, with a few more years left me—if I want to try to hang on for a few more years. I don't think I will, though."

She held her left hand out, palm down, and Jim saw the ring.

For years he had expected this, waking up sometimes in the night, sweating, as he pictured it. For years he'd known it had to come, and his level, unwinking stare and impenetrable reserve had been the buildup for

it. He'd trained his not-too-photogenic pan quite well, he thought; it didn't move a muscle now.

"Congratulations," he said, staring at the diamond. "But I knew before. Tiny was just in. He said you'd probably have to slip a hood over it for blackouts."

Starr smiled. It was the smile that had killed Jim since the time when the bruises on her body had transferred to her soul. It was a smile that moved the lips but not the eyes; it was a wise and calculating banner against the world, waving over a shield of skepticism. A good-humored, not unattractive shield, however. Starr, long resolved never to feel strongly about anything again, now did not even feel strongly about possible disillusionment.

"Allen wondered if it was too big. I think it is. I said I'd wear it tonight anyway."

"Just for tonight?" Jim's forehead wrinkled. That hadn't been so good. Voice off key. Question snapped a bit too fast.

"I think not, Jim," Starr said. "I think this is for keeps. Captain and Mrs. Allen Stratton, Palm Beach, New York, Bar Harbor."

"You love this guy, Starr?"

That smile was there again. Jim wanted to wipe it off. With his mouth. Grind it away, violently erase it with his lips. The smile flowered in a laugh.

"Love, Jim? Really? You've looked at 'love' through the window of Club Thirty for quite awhile. What do you call love, anyhow?"

"What do you call it?" he countered, blue, unwinking eyes on the pale shadows in the sheen of her throat.

"Oh," she said lightly, "I call it love when you don't mind much if a man touches you."

"That's the way you love Stratton?"

"That's the way."

"I wish you luck," said Jim. "You'll need it."

Her teeth showed a little, white and fresh as a child's. She patted his cheek, and Jim thought that he would probably dream that night of catching her hand and moving it up to his lips, but he didn't stir now.

"I wanted you to be the first to know," she said. "You're pretty close to me. Closer than anyone else in the world. Stop around at the table if you get a chance, will you?"

He nodded. He watched her go out of his office with her dancer's walk and her dancer's beauty, and then the door closed, its double panel slicing off the intruding din.

THE office was quiet again, undisturbed again; an enviable place according to most people, who seemed to find his niche in life quite enviable. Silent, well appointed, mastered, running smooth as clockwork. And abruptly Jim couldn't stand it. He'd smother if he didn't leave it.

He got up, tall and square and hard, in oxford gray since white tie might have put him in the headwater class. He slipped his luck piece into his pocket

and went along the narrow corridor to the bar and through it to the door. The overgrown diamond seemed to move mockingly ahead of him, a baleful beacon.

The entrance was like any other door along the street save for the great 30 above it, dimmed for wartime but still noticeable. In its bluish light the dark maroon of Mick's livery looked almost black.

Mick, powerful, gorilla-like, stared fondly at him. "Hi, boss. See her?"

"Yes," said Jim shortly.

Across the street some people stopped. One pointed at Ivor's dark figure and others looked. Jim said, "Everything smooth, Mick?"

"As duck grease, boss. Seems a shame you're going to—" Mick sighed and stopped. Jim went back inside, conscious of the staring eyes across the street, irritated a little by them but not showing it. That was the stunt—don't show things, never show things.

Fifty stools were ranged along the bar. There were more people than there were stools, standing customers wedged beside the seated ones, swelling the line till you could scarcely pry a way between it and the mirrored wall. It taxed even Jim's dexterity to get through that narrow doorway; but through it every year, narrow as it was, came around \$800,000 worth of business. It was fantastic. It astonished even Jim when he stopped to think about it.

He walked slowly through his big, crammed room, nodding here, smiling a little there, calling, "How are you, George?" to a youngish composer whose song hits for years had earned a place in Americana.

Jim traded heavily on his damaged ear. Most people knew enough about him to have heard that he was deaf in the left ear. He turned that side to those whose salutes he did not want to acknowledge.

He stood for a moment by a table, with his hand in a normal position behind his back. As though by X-ray through the wall of people Coombs, headwaiter, caught the sign: A bottle of champagne, my compliments.

At another table he sat down. There were a columnist, two well-known actresses, and their almost equally well-known agent. He talked a little, smiled a little, idly fingered an empty glass: Another round of drinks, my compliments.

He couldn't delay going to Starr's table much longer.

The table for Starr and Captain Stratton was ringside, of course. It had long been understood that Starr could claim the best spot in Club Thirty, any time, in funds or out. In fact, Jim had pointed out that the very time for her to come was when she was out of funds, this being an advantageous place in which to be seen. But Starr had never staked her claim. She came as a regular customer or she didn't come at all.

Jim had delayed with the actresses and their escorts till the four of them shone with pleasure at his attention. He

I was Star for a Night



BY MIMI BERRY

IT'S stranger than fiction—what happened to me. One night I was an obscure actress, reading a few lines in A Connecticut Yankee.

And the next thing, I was a star.

That night was like a small girl's dream come true. I sat in the star's dressing room at the Martin Beck Theater. I wore the star's glittering white gown.

Before the curtain, John Cherry was speaking to the audience. "Ladies and gentlemen," he was saying, "I know you will be disappointed to learn that Miss Vivienne Segal is ill and will not play the role of Queen Morgan la Fay tonight. But please do not be too disappointed. For tonight you are to enjoy a thrill which comes but once in a lifetime of theater-going. A nineteen-year-old girl is to play the wicked Queen. Until four this afternoon, no one knew she had learned the lines. She has never rehearsed with company or orchestra. Yet, we of the company feel sure that she will give a memorable performance. We are proud of our little star for a night, Miss Mimi Berry."

In the rear of the theater stood my mother. Tears rose to her eyes. She was silently praying. The orchestra played the overture. The curtain rose. All eyes were on me. I heard my cue. I spoke my first lines. I stood, stage center, in my dazzling white gown. The stage was mine . . . I was a star!

It all began when my phone rang early that afternoon. It was Eddie Scanlon, our stage manager. "Will you be home for the next half hour?" he asked. My heart jumped. I had been understudying Julie Warren, who plays the lead role of Alisande. But to my astonishment, Mr. Scanlon said: "Vivienne Segal is sick. Do you think you could take her place?"

I gasped. Vivienne Segal is one of the great singing stars of the stage.

"Well?" Eddie was asking. "I thought you told me you knew every word of the show."

It was true. My own tiny part had scarcely kept me busy during rehearsals. So I had sat watching the others—and I'd learned their lines, men and women alike. But to play the wicked Queen, to sing Miss Segal's famous song, To Keep My Love Alive! "I—I don't know if I can do it," I faltered.

"I'll call you back," Eddie said.

They say a drowning man sees his life pass before his eyes. For the next half hour, I thought of my struggles to get on the stage—I'd studied dancing when I was 2½ years old—I'd worked for years before I got chorus jobs. I had tried to get the part of Alisande in A Connecticut Yankee, but Dick Rodgers, the producer, had hired me for a tiny bit and to understudy Miss Warren.

I steeled myself. I waited. True to his word, Eddie called me in half an hour. "Come down to the office," he said. "And don't be jittery. You probably won't play it. Mr. Rodgers wants to cancel tonight's performance."

I met Eddie—he gave me the cues—I tossed back the lines to him. "Why, you're wonderful," he exclaimed. "How on earth did you learn that part without rehearsing?"

I explained that I have a freak memory—I'm a mathematics expert—and if I hadn't been engaged for the Yankee, I would have studied to be a mathematics teacher.

And at 4 o'clock I stood on the bare stage, Eddie held the script, Mr. Rodgers sat in the orchestra. "You can do it, Mimi," he said at last. "The show will go on."

Until that moment, I never realized what was happening. Now I knew my great moment was at hand. My heart was light. I raced to a telephone to break the news to Mother.

"My goodness!" she cried. "I'm scared to death!"

"Stop being scared, and jump into a cab. I need you," I told her.

Mother is not like most stage mothers—she has let me fight my own battles. She trusts me to pick my own boy friends—she doesn't mind when I go out for a post-midnight bite. She's regular, my mother is.

Off we sped, Mother and I, to dinner, where I ate heartily. It was 7 when we returned to the theater.

George Hiras, the orchestra leader, ran through To Keep My Love Alive with me. "You're letter-perfect, Mimi," he said. Next came Dick Foran, who plays the Connecticut Yankee, to rehearse our love scene. "Gosh, Mimi," Dick said, "you know it!"

Then . . . the curtain was up. I heard myself speaking the lines of Queen Morgan la Fay.

And then it was over, all over. The audience applauded. The Yankee, Alisande, Queen Morgan la Fay stood together to bow to the audience.

The curtain fell. It rose again. There I was under a white spotlight, alone, receiving the honors of a star!

And the audience cheered. I know why they cheered. Mr. Cherry's little speech had won sympathy for me. Yet, oh, what a thrill it was! An obscure young actress on one night—a star of stars the next.

Miss Segal was well enough to return to her role on the following evening. I am playing the little part of Angela. But I'm happy, and thankful, it was a rich experience—I shall work hard and try to go forward now so that I may be a star every night of my life.

couldn't put it off any more. He got up finally and went to the two who, as far as he was concerned, were all alone in this room, with only several hundred gesticulating ghosts around.

Starr's eyes were light as amber as she watched him come. Half a dozen other women here were more theatrically lovely, but none had that vital warmth, that aliveness—a vitality and warmth held under wraps for years but always smoldering through to catch the eye and fascinate it.

She said, "Jim. Nice going. We didn't know whether you could tear yourself away from the gang for even a minute with us."

THERE were a dozen possible replies, fencing, evading. But Jim had never fenced with Starr. Possibly he should have; perhaps he seemed heavy and humorless to her. "Yes, you did," he said. "You knew, all right."

Starr made a gamin face at him that went straight back to Cicero Avenue and said: "You know Captain Stratton?"

"Of course." But not too well. Not as well as you'd have thought. Allen Stratton, 34, butter-rich, had wrung a lot of fun from life but not so much in night clubs. Pre-Starr, he'd been in Thirty half a dozen times, no more.

Jim shook the captain's hand. It was a firm and brawny hand; the captain was a trim and husky lad, not much at the waist, a lot at the shoulders, with red-brown in his face even now, in winter. Packed, light brown hair was virile on his head, and darker eyes gave point to a face that otherwise might have been almost too good-looking. Quite a boy, this Captain Allen Stratton.

"Join us?" he said, his voice exactly right. He didn't urge, he didn't condescend; Jim was a guy he knew slightly and a guy he'd like to have at his table for a minute. That was all.

"Thanks," said Jim. A waiter was already coming with a chair, tracing a miraculous path among tables meshed as close as cogwheels in a watch.

"You won't need that," said Starr. "Take my chair. I've got to have a word with Bister."

"Who is he?" asked Stratton. "He's been waving for an hour."

"My agent," Starr replied. She looked meek, she struck a captive slave's pose, then spoiled it with her laugh. "He's worried. When he keeps rubbing at that fringe around his nice bald head it means he's worried. He thinks maybe he'll lose me."

"Well, he's right," said Stratton, very positive, very sure about it all.

"Be back in a minute." She left them. It was a show to watch her walk, and almost everybody looked. She moved like music. Stratton sighed and sat back down, with Jim across the table from him.

"She is certainly something."

"She is," said Jim.

The captain focussed on him then. He'd said the words in a low tone, really to himself. He said now, more

directly, "You've known her a long time, haven't you?"

Jim only nodded. He tried to find something here to hate a little and regretted that he could not. Allen Stratton seemed as sound as polished wood.

"I understand you're to be congratulated," Jim said.

"Yes. More than any other man who ever lived."

"The columnists will have fun."

Stratton shrugged, entirely unconcerned. "Sure. Stratton Steel Gets Green Light from Dancer. They should know how hard I worked. Starr wasn't easily persuaded."

Jim could well imagine this. He wondered just how Starr had phrased her answer, knowing her as he did.

They talked a little while—the war, the well-known folks around them, Starr's new dance number at the St. Giles. But the captain kept looking across twenty crowded feet at Starr, talking with the baldheaded man, poised and leisurely and mistress of herself. Too much mistress of herself! The captain's grin grew less. A cloud came in his eyes, not precisely trouble, just a lessened shine.

"Starr takes some knowing, doesn't she?" he said.

Jim nodded wordlessly. The last thing he wanted to do was discuss Starr with this man. But Stratton went on after a silent minute:

"She has everything to offer. Everything to give. She's tops. But she seems to . . . hold back. Always she seems to hold back." He said bluntly, "Why is that, Ivor?"

Jim disliked intensely this lack of reticence. It seemed like a flaw in Stratton. Though he supposed Stratton felt that in discussing Starr with an old friend of hers like Jim it was as if he were talking to a relative. A fond old uncle, maybe.

"Maybe you ought to ask her," Jim said.

"I think perhaps she'd rather have someone else tell me than go into it herself. I think maybe that's why she left us to ourselves a minute ago."

This had occurred to Jim, too, and anger stirred in him. Always he'd wanted to help Starr and she'd not permitted it. Now she thrust a thing like this on him.

Allen waved. Jim tried twice to say it and couldn't, and then he did. After all this man was going to live with Starr. He had a right to know.

"She's afraid of getting too close to people. To any one. She did it once."

"Married? Or was it—"

"Married," Jim said. "She was eighteen and he was twenty-nine. Gregg Marshall was his name. It wasn't very nice." Even now, after all the lapse of time, Jim couldn't keep the harshness from his voice. It amazed him that this could still be so.

"So she was hurt," said Stratton softly, accepting from Jim's tone how grim it had been. "I thought so. Poor kid. I wonder if she'll ever quite get over it."

"That's up to you, I'd say," Jim rose. He felt a silly desire to bust the captain

over the head with a bottle, a desire which he frustrated by briefly taking Stratton's hand. "The best, to both of you."

Starr met him halfway back to her table. She looked up at him, tawny head a little to one side.

"He's solid," Jim rasped. All the years of building up for this—they hadn't been enough. Right now he couldn't make his voice do what he wanted. "That's what you wanted to hear me say, wasn't it? That's why you got me here? Advice from Uncle Jim. Good old Uncle Jim."

He turned and went away. She stood a moment there before going back to the captain.

Jim had never felt so empty. And he'd never felt so fed up with Thirty. His Club Thirty, built by him, the only one of its kind. But the Thirties, he thought as he walked, stolid of face, toward the corridor, were all washed up. Already they were relics of a fizzy past; their day was done.

Or was it? Did they fill a gap, provide some needed sparkle in the gloom of war? Jim didn't know. Perhaps what he should say was that he was all washed up. He had been for many months, since Pearl Harbor, and only lately had he been allowed to do something about it.

He sat down in his office, and absently fiddled with the talisman from his pocket, the gold and leaden disc. An idiot's trick, to keep a bullet around in the half belief that as long as he had it things would be pretty much all right. Helped him think, though, through sheer habit of monkeying with it, and he had plenty to think of now.

Three weeks to check out of his business, to wash up his part in Club Thirty. He knew with neither conceit nor false modesty that Thirty wouldn't last long without Jim Ivor. Jules, Tiny, Mick, they knew the ropes. They were good men. But the place depended on more than that; it was a shadow of Jim personally, a projection in mirrors, chrome and leather of himself. Within six months it would run down. The trick, then, was to spot the day when accounts were due to slide from black to red, and close out fast avoiding loss. . . .

IT WASN'T any good. He had a lot to think about, but underneath was Starr. Starr and the captain. Constantly they bobbed up through the floor of his thinking and ruined it.

He gave it up and leaned back in his chair, tossing the small gold disc up a few inches in the air and catching it, turning it absently in his fingers. Starr and her captain. "I call it love when you don't mind much if a man touches you." What a picture!

He saw, after an indefinite span, that his clock said nearly 3. He oughtn't to sulk in here. He ought to go out and mingle around while he could. This got nobody anything, brooding in here. What difference did—

The door burst open with rude lack of ceremony. He swung in irritation. It was Starr.

Starr looked good and mad. Her face was white except for color in a spot over each cheekbone. Her eyes were angry gold. Looming behind her was Tiny, looking anxious, kind of guilty, flustered.

"Why didn't you tell me?" snapped Starr, marching up to Jim.

Jim looked first at her and then, stonily, at his gigantic general manager.

"I thought you'd let her in on it, boss," Tiny pleaded. "I saw you talking to her—I thought you'd surely told her."

"He didn't!" Starr exclaimed. "Not one word! Who do you think you're holding out on, Jim Ivor? Or—was Tiny kidding?"

"He wasn't kidding," said Jim reluctantly. "Why should he be? Did you think I'd sit this out forever?"

"You've got a deaf ear. The Navy can't use—"

"They're not so fussy as they used to be, Starr."

"But Jim! A mine sweeper!"

"Yeah," said Tiny. "That's what I said, too. 'A mine sweeper!' I said. 'Why, that ain't safe!' I said."

"Oh, Jim! You could have got in the business end, with your knowledge of buying, managing. . . . But you had to go and—You should have told me! Who has a better right to know, after all the years we've—Close as we've—"

"You're forgetting," Jim said. "There's a closer one now. Stratton. And that reminds me—I want to get a little present for you. Something you can keep around to show you what I think of you, and that there's a lift for you any time you need it."

He stopped, and his fingers became

conscious of the weighty little disc they held. He tossed it up once more, and caught it with a solid, hard spat of metal on his palm.

"Of course! I guess it's a crazy thing to give a bride, a secondhand bullet. But it says everything I mean. Here."

For half a dozen heartbeats there was silence in the office. Then Tiny said, "Boss! You can't do that! That's your luck. You can use luck in this war!" His voice was urgent.

Starr, looking with big eyes into Jim's face, said not one thing. She turned away, with the present clutched in her tight white hand. Her shoulders moved. Small sounds came from her mouth.

Listening, dull red seeped into Jim's face and neck. He stared at the shaking shoulders. "All right," he growled. "All right. I said it was crazy, didn't I? I just thought—it happens to mean a little something to me—call it superstition, anything you like. You could wait till you got out of here, at least, before you started laughing."

"Oh!" Starr whirled on him, face twisted up. "The clever, the intuitive Jim Ivor! Laugh! Tiny, what do I have to do to make this fool ask me to marry him?"

Jim touched his collar. It was choking him. He looked at her, at Tiny. They were on his right, the side on which he usually heard things well enough.

He mumbled, "Marry you? Me? Marry—"

"Yes!" Starr looked as if uncertain whether to look, or to claw at his eyes. "Oh, confound you, Jim!"

"But you—I asked you once—"

But he didn't reply to my question.

In the end, we wound up in an old wine tavern, which could have been a Viennese beer house just as well.

"This is something unique," Pavel bragged. "Not everybody is allowed to go here. You are fortunate because you are with me."

"It's very rustic," I said.

The waiter looked aristocratic and reminded me of a Prussian baron I once met in Ankara. He gave me a big smile and brought a bottle of wine. He said it was Sylvaner, and the best they had.

The wine made me a little dizzy. I shouldn't drink in the afternoon. But Pavel did all the talking, anyway.

Finally, he changed the subject and arrived at politics. Why are men in Europe so poor at finding a topic with a girl nowadays?

"Do you think there will be any Hungarian counter action?" he asked.

"No idea!"

"I am sure you have traveled enough to tell me something about the Rumanian defenses," he insisted.

"Why spoil our day with politics?" I said.

"Because we live in great times. You shouldn't leave the continent during this interesting war. There is only one

was that? You fool! You idiot! How long ago was that? And just a short time after Gregg—"

Tiny slid discreetly out of there, silent as three cubic yards of smoke.

"For years I've tried everything but framing you in a second-class hotel. But you—you didn't care. You're a stone. You've grown a shell so thick you couldn't dent it with a bomb. So finally I was going to marry Allen. Why not?"

They were locked together. How they'd got that way, when they'd moved together, Jim couldn't remember. They were that way now.

But he moved back a bit to put his hand under Starr's chin. He said, "Look here. What about Stratton? The guy's all right. You didn't just—use him, did you?"

"No, Jim," said Starr. "No, darling. I wasn't trying any jealousy stunt. I meant to marry him. He's nice, he knew just what he was getting, and I'd have lived up to it. But when I saw the two of you together at that table, when I looked at him and then at you—"

"Now who's the fool?" said Jim. "Palm Beach, New York, Bar Harbor—or a second-class seaman on a mine sweeper. You ought to have your head examined."

He examined it—around the lips. This thing was still too new, too overwhelming, to grasp. He didn't think he'd ever know quite how it came about. But one thing he thought he did know: That hurtful smile would never mark her lips again, with this erasure.

THE END

Every Man for Herself

Continued from page 21

when it is time to change the subject.

He had a little car, and after luncheon, which he paid, of course, he said he would like to do some sight-seeing with me. I utterly despise sight-seeing, but there is not much else to do in a foreign town. He explained to me how romantic Belgrade is with its mixture of Austrian and Serbic styles, and he knew a lot of names for it. I would have preferred to talk to the people in the streets, who looked friendly but had a gloomy fear in their eyes. Instead, he dragged me along to the Town Hall, the hospital, the bank and the cathedral, and explained that each big building was surrounded by sand bags, because the war was lurking somewhere very near.

I asked: "Are sand bags sufficient?"

nation and one leader, and there is plenty of work for a beautiful girl like you. I could promise you an exciting life, if you would agree."

"Thanks," I said, "I always find my own excitement."

I could see how disappointed he was. A handsome man can look very ugly when he is disappointed.

All of a sudden the good-looking waiter took part in our conversation. "In a year you could be the richest and most important woman in Europe," he said.

"I want to go to America," I said. I was so mad about this proposition that it took my whole supply of background to keep me from spitting at them.

"Even from America you could help us," the good-looking waiter said. "Just write a little letter every week, and tell us what you have seen and heard. You can hear a lot; you are the type men confide in. And you wouldn't regret having written!"

Pavel whispered: "We are generous in giving presents, nice presents, to be sure."

Now I knew what kind of a speak-easy I was in. "I can get presents with less effort," I said, still very lady-like.

Life, indeed, can be very colorful.

It's Modern to be Old-Fashioned



Slacks may be the order of the day on the swing shift, but pastel furbelows and laces are very much on the scene at night if you want to please your soldier beaux. Even if you do a man-sized job at a lathe, a store counter, or an office desk, it's modern to leave your business at the threshold of your home, and devote yourself to making something of your marriage.

People who lived in the Gay 'Nineties have often bewailed the loss of its camaraderie in these rushed modern times. They think that the world has forgotten too quickly how beautiful the simple things of yesterday were. They're sure we could use a bit more of the old-fashioned charm and ease of those times. And today, that's just what we're doing.

Many old-fashioned pleasures are back in style because of the war. We're discovering that it's fun to walk, to play parlor games, to sing the old sentimental songs with a catch in your voice . . . that making over old clothes and fixing up food leftovers is a challenge to our cleverness. . . . Courtships are going back to the old customs, too. It's quite modern to go on a date and not kiss the first time he brings you home . . . or to stay in the parlor enjoying the family album and even to knit HIM a scarf or a pair of gloves with your own little hands. These days it is often Mother and Dad who go off to the movies while you wash the dishes and he dries.

Yes, it's modern to be old-fashioned. To enjoy fussing about the house . . . to count on thrift and hard work and loyalty . . . to dig into the attic of remembrances of things long past but not forgotten . . . and to love your family, your sweetheart, your country with a fervor that goes beyond words.

BY BEATRICE KAY

Radio's Gay 'Nineties Songstress

If it weren't against my principles to take things too easy, I could have had quite an experience. But the longer I thought about it, the less did I feel like Mata Hari. Therefore, I got up quickly, called them a lot of names, and left, very disgusted, indeed.

After an ugly experience I have the habit to be as good to myself as possible. That helps the complexion and prevents that deep line between the brow and nose. Therefore, I went to the old city and bargained for a pair of lapislazuli earrings in an antique shop. The old shopkeeper sold to the young salesman in Turkish. "Ask double the price, she is an American."

"Not yet," I said in Turkish, "you'd better sell them for the regular price."

Both men were embarrassed, and I got the earrings for ten dollars, which was not too high a price. The Americans must be proud that they are so highly rated in the Balkans.

Later, in my compartment, I counted my money: thirty-nine dollars! That wasn't much to go to America with. But fifty dollars hadn't been much, either.

Deep in fruitless thought about money, I suddenly saw a bunch of red roses appearing in my window, and behind them an officer. It was Pavel who wanted to forget politics for a moment. I can't help it, I like red roses. So I took them.

When the train finally pulled out of the station, I opened *Gone With the Wind* again. I re-read the first sentence and came to the second, when the dining car waiter announced dinner. Suddenly I was very hungry.

TO GET to the dining car I had to squeeze myself through six coaches, and that was a trip through misery and despair. Those six coaches had been added to our train at the border, and carried refugees fleeing from Rumania, from Hitler and from the Iron Guard. They were mostly Jewish families with small children. Some of the little ones were crying; it sounded as though the whole car were crying. Men were sleeping on the floor. Women fed the children with what they had saved from home and stuffed into wicker baskets. They ate, but not at ease. The air was stuffy, though the coaches were ill-heated. Seeing them made me decide that I would probably be very unselfish for the duration, although it was something new for me to worry about anyone besides myself.

The headwaiter led me to a corner table, at which two English boys were sitting. They didn't wear a label "Made in England," but I have acquired an eye for that. Not in vain was I married to a diplomat. They were very young, had thin blond mustaches and wore white polo shirts. One of them played a mouth organ with more pleasure than ability.

I ordered tea and scrambled eggs, which is always the safest bet in a dining car in these days, and felt a headache coming on. I am certainly not the migraine type, and I hate these lying-on-a-couch-in-a-dark-room-

ladies, but every now and then a girl is entitled to a headache. Therefore, when the waiter arrived with tea and eggs, I asked him to stop the harmonica music. The repertoire was too monotonous. The gay musician stopped playing at once, but he and his friend were furious. Quite a funny fury, though. When I asked the waiter for some salt, they ran through the car and put all the twenty salt shakers in front of my plate, and when I asked for water, they repeated the procedure with water pitchers.

Therefore, I stopped asking for things and said: "Let's make peace, boys, we only live once. Better have some fun."

And that started our trip-long friendship. To tell the truth, they were not quite my type, but a girl can't always be too choosy, especially if there is no choice. Besides, I was once married to my type and had to divorce him, which proves that your type is not always the right thing for you.

In my compartment, Mike, the elder one, constantly held a brown briefcase on his lap. He looked like a lady with a parrot, and I asked him what he was carrying along.

"Hot dogs," he said.

I knew that dogs were not allowed openly in a Pullman, but I couldn't understand why he heated them up.

"Why heat the poor babies?" I asked.

"Evidently you have never been in America." He laughed out loud, but I didn't like this one-sided sense of humor. Because Mike didn't stop bawling, Dennis showed more kindness and explained the case. "Hot dogs," he said, "have nothing to do with dogs. Perhaps, in a previous stage, with an oxen, but now they are reincarnated as sausages." But not even sausages were in the briefcase; it contained documents for Ankara.

"Why the whole detour?" I asked.

"Because we are diplomats," they said. They certainly didn't look their part!

Mike wanted to make up for his fooling and offered a harmonica concert. My headache was gone, but the other passengers seemed to catch it. They called the conductor, and this man was not afraid to throw His Majesty's couriers out of my drawing room.

WHEN I had just settled down to the third sentence of *Gone With the Wind*, I heard a knock at my door and two men walked in. Strangers, but I could tell their nationality immediately by their Fritz haircuts.

"What do you want?" I asked.

"Company," they said. "A little company from a neutral girl."

"I am only neutral as long as I am not bothered." And with that I showed them the door. I'd had enough from Nazis for the duration. Believe it or not, they left. That taught me something about the much-advertised Nazi aggression. Just show them the cold shoulder, and they leave you in peace. Too bad that so many nations in Eu-



What good is a \$10.00 raise ...if it then costs you \$12.00 more to live?

SURE WE ALL want a raise . . . but raises today are bad medicine. Bad medicine for you. Bad medicine for everybody else. And here's why . . .

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Multiply these hundreds of items that everybody has to *pay more for* by the thousands of other workers who want raises . . . and by the thousands of business men and farmers who want more money for their products . . . result . . . you and all the others need another raise to make ends meet.

And so it goes . . . wages and prices chase each other up and up . . . until prices get so high that your dollar isn't worth a dollar any more.

So what good is a raise if your living

costs go up even faster? And there's so little you can buy today anyway . . . with most factories in war production.

Of course it's hard to give up the luxuries of life . . . and even harder to give up some of the necessities. But this is War! And when you think of the sacrifices our fighting men are making . . . many of them giving up their lives for us . . . no sacrifice we can make should be too great.

So if you want to be able to enjoy the good things of life in the peaceful days to come . . . if you want to speed victory and thus save the lives of thousands of fighting men . . . start doing these seven things now . . .

1. Buy only what you need. Take care of what you have. Avoid waste.

2. Don't try to profit from the war. Don't ask more than you absolutely *must* for what you have to sell . . . whether it's goods or your own labor you're selling.

3. Pay no more than ceiling prices. Buy rationed goods only by exchanging stamps. Otherwise, you're helping the black-market criminals, hurting yourself and all other good Americans.

4. Pay taxes willingly. They're the cheapest way of paying for the war.

5. Pay off your old debts—all of them. Don't make new ones.

6. If you haven't a savings account, start one. If you have an account, put money in it—regularly. Put money in life insurance, too.

7. Buy and hold War Bonds. Don't stop at 10%. Remember—Hitler stops at nothing!

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Another Betty Co-Ed of Hollywood offering on page 119.

rope didn't know that years ago. I hurried over to the English boys in search of protection, and they quickly offered me a drink. I wondered what Hungary would get if she went over to the English. I personally do not like whiskey. That worried Dennis very much, because he couldn't visualize how a human being could get along in America without whiskey, and he told me a long and not very effective story about America and whiskey and resumed sadly that I didn't know what I was in for.

All of a sudden it came to my mind—because he also had told long eventful stories—that my gray friend from Debrecen was not on the train anymore. Therefore, I wished the English boys good night and went to look for the conductor.

He was sitting in his stuffy corner, smoking. "The Belgrade police took him off the train," he replied to my question concerning my gray friend. "He possessed neither a Bulgarian nor a Turkish visa, but only a Yugoslav transit. They shipped him back to the Hungarian border—such things happen every day."

FOR five days I had been on the Simpson Express, and was still without a serious flirtation. I wished we'd get to Istanbul. Mike and Dennis were sweet kids, but they didn't count.

I once talked this problem over with Mother: What should a girl do when she is for a long time without a serious flirtation? And Mother said: "A girl should wait, so that she is free when the right one comes." Mother is very good at talking problems over, and she is not like other mothers who, with a soft voice and a clerical intonation, say: "My dear child, everything was so different in my time."

I usually follow her ideas. But to tell the truth, I found it rather boring to wait for the right one on the Simpson Express. All I had experienced since Belgrade were borders. There are too many borders in Europe for my taste.

If women had had anything to say in European politics, they would have done something about those borders, because women hate to pack and unpack every five hours. That ruins their things and their humor.

After Yugoslavia came Bulgaria. Of course, we didn't cross the border during a normal daytime hour, but at 4 in the morning. Crossing a border always happens when people want to sleep.

Two huge men woke me up, pulled everything out of my trunks, decorated my room with slips, stockings, perfume bottles, evening gowns, and more of such female attire. They also asked lots of questions—and all that on an empty stomach.

"What are you looking for?" I asked finally.

The customs officer paused, somewhat bewildered: "I don't know. We have orders." And according to these orders he dragged me along to the customs house.

The chief at the customs house was proud that he could read my Turkish passport. Therefore, he read aloud and supplemented it with personal remarks:

"Eyes: Green. Not quite.
"Hair: Red. What a red!
"Complexion: White. With freckles!
"Weight: One hundred and eight. Is that quite true?

"Height: Five feet four. Could be.
"Distinguishing marks: None.
"That's a mistake," he said. "They should have written 'Very beautiful.'"

He kissed my hand in front of the whole crowd. I felt a little better about the Kingdom of Bulgaria after that. This, at least, was a better frontier than the first one.

Back in my compartment, I wanted to continue with Gine With the Wind. But the two couriers were already waiting in my compartment, as if I had invited them for breakfast.

At the breakfast table, we formed a very congenial crowd: An Austrian refugee family, the two Nazis, the English couriers, and me. The headwaiter had made this arrangement. In the diplomatic service he wouldn't have climbed very high up the ladder.

The Nazis, according to their tradition, criticized everything foreign, and started every sentence with: "Bei uns in Deutschland..." They also snubbed the refugee family. Therefore, I was especially nice to the lady, whose jewels made her look like a Christmas tree. I asked her how she got all her jewels out, but because of the company she was reluctant to explain. Therefore, I found a less conspicuous topic with her husband, who had been in the handbag and leather accessories business, and we talked for a long time about the Viennese chic.

That made the Nazis mad. "Do you know how a Hungarian cook book begins?" one of them asked me.

Of course, I didn't trouble to answer.

He said: "Each recipe begins: 'Steal six eggs...'"

"Maybe Hungarians steal eggs from time to time," I said, "but they do not steal whole countries with all their wealth, and pretend to be doing them a favor."

He didn't continue with his cookbook stories.

IN SOFA everything was calm. No excitement at the station, no soldiers, no talk of war. Father had been afraid that Hitler would be in Sofia before I got there. But I was not afraid. I never am. I always think I am lucky. Father didn't like it when I talked like that, and to tell the truth, he was not alone in this opinion. The whole family and all his friends shared it. They said I was challenging fate.

Well, anyway, I was lucky in Sofia, and, unmolested, we moved toward another frontier, Greece.

At the Greek border, I was already so trained in customs routine that I did not mind it any more. But something else was quite entertaining: The bridge between the two countries had been blown up because of the war in

Greece, and we had to leave the Simpon Express and walk to the Greek enclave.

Imagine walking through on an unpaved alley, which was mostly used for garbage and dead dogs, wearing high-heeled shoes and carrying twenty-one pieces of luggage! Besides, it was raining. But I pasted a brave grin on my face and remembered that I had to be a girl for every weather. My two couriers shouldered as much of my luggage as they could, and off we went. I was ankle deep in mud, and it took some skill to pull one foot up in order to sink the other one in.

I was so absorbed in doing this that I didn't notice a tall stranger at my side until he started talking.

"Come on, girly!" It was a sort of order, and before I had time to look up—my head reached only to his elbow—he picked me up and carried me through the mud.

"It was rather ruthless of those Greeks to blow up the bridge when they have such a visitor," he said. He was the best-looking man I had ever seen!

"Thank you," I said, "my feet thank you, and my stockings, too. The shoes died in action, otherwise they also would thank you."

I had my arms around his neck. He smelled of good tobacco. I adore good tobacco. He didn't answer, but carried me some hundred feet to the waiting train. There he put me down and, without giving me time to ask questions, disappeared in the dark. Quite a modern St. Christopher.

The accommodations on the new train were by no means first class. We sat on hard wooden benches, with the luggage piled up everywhere. I hoped to see my rescuer again, but I only caught a glimpse of him when he passed by carrying a black scotty in his arm. The poor thing was covered with a crust of mud and needed a haircut badly.

My two couriers were suddenly very jealous, though unfortunately I never saw that man again on the train. Perhaps he was riding on the locomotive.

It is strange that men, even if they are not your ever-loving husband and have not the tiniest right to you, get jealous immediately. Jealousy is a wide-spread illness and there are no injections against it.

We stopped a couple of times for no good reason, but finally reached the Turkish border and a place called Ederene.

Again there was fuss about passports and visas and money and jewels, but this time not for me. I talked Turkish to them and they liked me, and we were all very gay. One of the customs officers gave me the newest edition of the Ullus. For a moment I had a strange feeling somewhere near my heart. My ex-husband's paper! I had read his daily political column

every day, because I wanted to talk about politics. That was my greatest ambition in those days. It didn't help much, and I often wondered why highly intelligent men have such a predilection for dumb women.

One thing is sure: Today's headlines were easier to understand. I didn't need a college education for that.

HITLER MARCHES INTO BULGARIA!

HITLER IN SOFIA!

HITLER ON THE BULGARIAN-GREEK BORDER!

The gentleman had missed us only by one hair! I know I am always lucky. I whispered the news to my couriers and to the Christmas-tree family. They were very upset. I didn't say a word to the Nazis. Usually those tourists know such news before it is printed.

There was no dining car to distract us a little. The few chocolates I had left I divided among the English boys and the Austrians. I tried to starve the Nazis. And later I even opened the dusty bottle of hundred-year-old Tokay, Mother's beloved treasure, which was destined for her friend in Istanbul. We saved the label and all of the antique dust, but nothing of the precious liquid.

At the next stop I bought a quart of cheap country wine and poured it into my Tokay bottle. Mike fixed the cork and sealed it so that none of the genuine look was lost, and we all enjoyed being so childish.

Soon I became very tired and we all dozed. I fell asleep on an English shoulder and woke up on a German one. I swiftly switched back to the English.

When Mike finally called me back to reality we were close to Istanbul. The sun was rising and golden light colored both the earth and the peasants who worked on it.

The fig trees were in full bloom and there was a gorgeous view of the sea. Nothing can be as blue and beautiful as the Marmara Sea. I opened the window and made a wish as I always do on the same spot.

My ex-mother-in-law was buried there in the sea, and Orhan used to promise me that, if I had a wish, his mother's soul would help me to get what I wanted. Usually I am not superstitious, but I always made a wish because a girl has so many wishes in her system that she doesn't care by what means they are fulfilled.

I wished that I would have enough money to get to America, then wondered whether the old lady would still be of assistance to me, since we are no longer related. Considering the character of Turkish women, I doubted it very much.

THE END

IMPROVEMENTS WILL HAPPEN

(AS EVERY DAUGHTER KNOWS)

NO BELTS
NO PINS
NO PADS
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In every family there is usually somebody who wants to change and somebody who wants to "stay put" . . . New methods, new products, new habits—they all meet resistance at first, but nevertheless improvements will happen!

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Broadway's Meanest Racket

Continued from page 51

her objections to the more expensive hot spots. It hadn't been hard, especially as she seemed to love the Times Square area as though it were a person.

"Nothing like little old New York," she'd sigh as they wandered through the close-packed, dimmed-out streets. "Even without the bright lights, this is for me."

Joe began to love the place himself. The incredible push and reek and clamor of humanity dressed up, having a night off. The incredible numberless love affairs beginning, going on, ending, under your eyes.

There were things that got his Irish up, however. The souvenir stores for example. He couldn't pass them without a little gush of rage inside him. He wanted to storm in and yell at the eager-eyed servicemen buying cheap trifles for exorbitant sums.

"Don't be suckers, boys! The goods aren't worth it . . . they're taking advantage of you guys, just because you're starved for a little fun and you've got a little money to spend! They're getting rich off you guys. . ."

Yes, that's the way he'd have liked to talk. But when he mentioned it to Barby, she didn't seem to know what he meant. "What's the difference, if the guys have fun? Probably they wouldn't like the stuff if it were cheaper."

Yes, that would be the philosophy of her kind. What's the difference, if the guys have fun? Had that been her attitude with the marine captain? He'd had his fun, so why shouldn't he pay for it? Was that her attitude with him? Would it seem only natural and right for her to present him with the bill when it was all over? In the form of a ring, or a fur coat or—

SHE told him more about herself the second week they knew each other. She'd been poor all right. She'd lived, all her life, on her appeal to men. Though of course she didn't put it that way. She just mentioned, casually, her jobs. "I was a drive-in girl in a road-house . . . then this man got me a job as a theater usher . . . during the depression I did a lot of taxi dancing . . . it was tough . . . much better when this man got me a job in a night club . . . all us girls got a cut on the liquor there . . . depending on how much the customers drank."

She was very reticent as to how she was living now. Just a mention, one day, of an aunt out West who'd left her a little money. "Some shock to me . . . I'd never seen her and hardly

even heard of her. Never dreamed she had a cent either—"

Joe was burning up inside to ask more. But he didn't dare. So far he'd been rigidly careful. Not an extra question, not a suspicious look—nothing, however slight, to make him seem anything but a love-struck Michigan boy, with a sergeant's stripes, stationed in New York.

Once, only once, Barby mentioned the marine captain. "We were going to be married," she said quietly, "but he—he wanted to wait till he came back. Three months after he was shipped I got a letter from a pal of his—that he was lost in action."

When he tried to express sympathy, she just smiled that sad, vague smile and passed it by.

It was funny, about kissing her. To Joe O'Hara there had always been something repugnant about the idea of making love to a woman so as to land her, eventually, in jail. That's why, so far, he'd fought clear of vice squad duty. Of course he knew the job had to be done. But—well, there were other guys who honestly didn't mind doing it.

Originally, when Deputy Inspector Coles had outlined this assignment, Joe had felt his old repugnance rise. Making love to a woman was strictly part of a guy's private life!

That's what one part of him said. But there was another part of Joe—the part that wanted to stand up and yell when he saw servicemen being gypped in souvenir stores on Broadway.

So he'd taken the job, the dirty part with the rest. After he met Barby the dirty part seemed lower, and meaner than ever. It was only after he'd known her about ten days (nights rather) that the situation began to take on such a remarkably different aspect.

Barby had beautiful lips. Joe would find himself watching them across all those little restaurant tables. Watching them as she talked, as she drank the mild mixed drinks she liked. Joe found himself imagining, vividly, what it would be to kiss those lips—

What it would be to hold Barby tight in his two arms.

When, one night, he finally found an excuse to ask her to come to his rooms for something, he held his breath. Asking her was all in the line of duty of course, but Joe O'Hara wasn't thinking of that.

She accepted, without demur, but without any special sign of eagerness.

Kissing her was all that Joe had imagined. No, it was more. Far, far more! There are pretty girls whose kisses are a letdown. There are girls, like Barby, whose kisses are not only a mystery and an intoxication, but something much better. Girls you could never kid about afterwards—

Joe O'Hara had never admitted to himself in so many words that he was in love with a woman. He'd been "stuck on" girls of course. He'd had "yens." But—

He didn't admit he was in love with Barby. But after that night he knew

beyond question that what he felt about her he'd never felt for a girl before. After that night it was just a question of when and how things would happen.

Five nights later, they were wandering down 42nd Street toward Eighth Avenue. A few yards ahead of them were two sailors. Eagerly following the sailors were two girls.

From the back they might have been any girls. Only when they stopped, giggling and absorbed, to pretend to look in a shop window, Barby and Joe saw their faces. Maybe—just possibly—the tall one was 16, but the small one couldn't have been within two years of that.

Her face made Joe think of a little girl who'd got into her mother's dressing table and joyfully daubed herself with everything in sight. Over the smooth round cheeks of childhood, a fantastic thick-caked mask had been imposed. Lipstick, rouge, eye cosmetics—she was a fearful and terrible sight and Joe's throat closed with anger and pain. He thought of the thousands of children, like her, the lost children—so many that it would require thousands of Policewoman Greens to save them—

And then Barby's hand tightened slowly on his arm. "Gosh, I hate to see that. Those crazy babies that ought to be home in bed!"

"Yeah—" said Joe roughly. And suddenly he pulled Barby hard against him.

Very close together, they walked on.

"I SAW a kid today," Barby said suddenly, "I can't get out of my mind. In the restroom at Loew's State. Maybe she was fourteen. I heard her talking to some other girl. Seems she'd run away from home—some little town upstate—and she was bragging, poor crazy little dope, that her folks didn't have any idea where she was—"

Second Grade Detective O'Hara picked up his ears. "Sounds like a case for the cops," he said.

"Yeah. You know I really wished they would pick her up. I wouldn't report her. Somehow I wouldn't have the heart. Because—well, I ran away from home myself once—and—you know how it is?"

"I know," said Detective O'Hara. It was then, for the first time, that he felt that new special feeling toward Barby. It wasn't only that he suddenly wanted to sweep her up in his arms and hold her tight. He wanted to hold her tight forever. He wanted to tell her how good she was. Yes, good and sweet in her heart and soul and dearer than all the world—

Detective O'Hara swallowed hard. Then he made himself speak. "I don't suppose you found out this kid's name or anything?"

"The other girl called her Daisy. The two of them were waiting to meet some more girls, I guess. You know those kids use movie restrooms as a hangout?"

Joe knew. Policewomen of the Juvenile Aid Bureau had done some

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of their best work in moving picture restrooms. He made a mental note. Daisy. At sangtime at Loew's State.

At the same time, he was so profoundly stirred that it was all he could do not to turn to Barby and—

She spoke again. "Yes," she said softly, "I only wish the cops would pick up that child. If I knew where to report her—but no, I guess that isn't in my line."

Joe jerked himself back, as though he'd been leaning over a precipice.

"Not in my line either, I'm afraid," he said. "I always was a great one for minding my own business. How about a drink, honey?"

That night he talked to the Old Man about it.

"Frankly, I think we'd better be very careful about just how we pick up this girl called Daisy. I wouldn't have it done right away, or at Loew's State either. Let it seem we got the tip from some other source."

The Old Man looked sharply at Joe, under his beetle brows:

"You think it's a trap, eh?"

"I don't know, sir. It could be, easily. She made quite a point of hoping the police would step in. If she's got any doubts about me this would be a perfect way to check up. You know—you tell a good cop about a runaway kid and one thing's bound to happen. That kid is picked up, investigated, sent back home."

"If it's a trick," the Inspector said slowly, "it's a smart one."

"If she's a crook, she's a smart one."

The Old Man cleared his throat.

"Any new developments on her?"

"No, sir."

"Oh! Look here, O'Hara—Police-woman Green isn't infallible. Do you suppose we're on the wrong track with this girl?"

"It's possible, sir, of course."

The Old Man began to make meaningless figures on the memo pad before him.

"Er—I don't suppose you could force the issue, O'Hara?"

"As a matter of fact, sir, I planned to do just that."

"And exactly what have you got in mind?"

"I plan to propose to her, sir."

The Old Man looked away from Joe, down to his desk. He bore down hard on his pencil. His florid face deepened slightly in color.

"Well, now, look here, my boy. This job is enormously important—you know that. But on the other hand—we don't want to cause any unnecessary personal tragedies."

"No, sir. I don't plan to."

The Old Man threw down his pencil.

"Well, boy, suppose this girl is perfectly straight. She might even be in love with you! Supposing she accepts you, boy—what then?"

"Then, sir," Joe O'Hara said quietly, "I'll marry her, please God!"

He looked very young, and defenseless and exalted.

The Old Man looked at him. Then he doodled another moment. It was as though he hadn't heard. Then

suddenly he put the pencil down and stood up.

"Good luck, son," he said very quietly, for him.

He shook hands with Joe.

As Joe was leaving he was thinking of Barby. He thought about her almost continuously between his interview with the Old Man and their next meeting which was on a Thursday night. And he thought about her with love and yearning that was like a prayer.

At sixteen minutes past 2, on a Thursday evening, he asked Barbara Eustace to marry him. The setting wasn't at all what he'd had in mind. They had privacy, true—a whole empty subway car, because this night, for the first time, Barby had let Joe take her home to Brooklyn. But subway cars are hardly conducive—

Joe kept his bargain with himself. At the moment of asking the most serious question of his life, to the first woman he'd loved, he lied to her.

"Of course we wouldn't be married till after the war. And I'll probably be shipped any day now. I'd understand if you didn't want to be tied down—"

"Would you?" said Barby. She was twisting her fingers together. Her face was very pink. She was smiling and Joe didn't know what the smile meant.

Suddenly she looked up at him. "I won't mind being tied down," she whispered. Joe never knew how it was that his arms got around her and his lips on hers, but he will always remember the agonized guilty prayer in his heart: I'll make this up to you, my darling. I'll be the fairest, squarest husband—

By the time they got out at the Brooklyn stop he wanted to bawl like a kid. After all, a guy looks forward to a thing like this most of his life. Then to have it cheapened and smeared by lies.

But there was no use drawing it out.

As he left her at her doorstep he said softly: "Will you meet me tomorrow to pick out a ring?"

"A ring?"

"I'd like you to have that, anyway. That is—I mean—to remember me by in case—"

"It's sweet of you," said Barby, "to think of that."

AND even the magic of her good-by kiss didn't quiet the panic, the doubt gnawing like a tooth. Would the average woman in love want an engagement ring "to remember" a man by, in case he went to his death? Joe couldn't quite think so. He'd purposely put the offer in just that crude way. Hoping—no, praying—that she would refuse.

And she hadn't refused. Joe O'Hara spent twenty-four hours of hell. He spent half of them wondering what jeweler she'd choose. He'd let her decide of course. Would it be some shady character well known to Joe O'Hara, late of the jewelry squad? Or some respectable, hitherto unsuspected firm which was lending itself secretly to the racket?

Did it mean a girl was a crook just because she wanted an engagement ring?

He'd mark the ring, of course. Mark it and say good-bye to Barb. Then, after he was "shipped" they could look for the thing to turn up again in the store's inventory. And—

Suppose it never turned up? Suppose that ring simply stayed on Barb's slim, pretty ring finger? A symbol of love, a sign of faith—

Detective O'Hara sweated in his bed at night. Sweet saints, wouldn't you think it would be simple, when a guy wanted to marry a girl?

Why should he go through this? How could he, or any guy, go to a girl he loved and say: "Excuse me, sweetheart, but I've been lying to you. I'm not Sergeant Joe O'Hara from Michigan. I'm a New York dick who was trying to trap you. Only, by mistake, I fell in love with you. Of course I had to find out first, whether you were a crook. But now that I'm sure—"

No! The girl didn't live who'd take that from any man alive! How did he get into this anyway? What ever made him think it would be great stuff to be a cop?

O H, BARBY, Barb, be on the level! And then, try, try to understand! "Say, we've got to be getting that ring for you," Joe O'Hara told Barb on Friday night, at the Crystal Cave. "According to barracks rumor I'm due to be shipped awful soon."

"How soon?" she asked him steadily. "Oh, any day now. You know how it is."

"Yes. Well, I've been thinking, Joe. I don't think that ring is such a good idea."

Joe O'Hara put down the glass he was drinking from. Carefully. Because his right hand, his steady gun hand, was shaking so.

"You—you what?"

"It was nice of you," Barb said quietly, "but a ring—well, if—if anything happened to you a ring wouldn't be much consolation for me, would it?"

"I—I guess—"

"I'd rather figure," said Barb softly, "that nothing's going to happen. Let's plan it that way. Why not? We could take the money that you'd spend for the ring and put it into some good furniture for after the war. Or something like that."

Joe O'Hara hadn't cried since he could remember. But if he'd been alone that minute he'd have bawled like a baby.

If he could have talked at all, he'd probably have told her—then. But his voice seemed to have got itself lost, and he was always a guy who had the devil's own time finding the right words.

So instead of talking Joe leaned forward and, right in public, kissed Barbara Eustace.

Later—much much later that night—Joe O'Hara found himself thanking his guardian angel that he hadn't talked. Then he found himself cursing his guardian angel, and his luck, and

all his life that had led up to this awful hour.

Then at last he found himself thinking of soldiers. Soldiers on leave. Scared boys away from home the first time. Or seasoned young veterans back from the front. Back from disease and horror and stench and the greedy hands of death. Back so starved for a little happiness that anything in skirts looks wonderful. Despite their sophisticated talk, they were the easiest prey in the world for clever women! They'd dreamed of women too long, in their fox holes, to see them clearly any more.

Joe thought about those boys a long, long time. It wasn't that his thoughts made Barb seem less desirable. But there was a different perspective on things.

From old habit Deputy Inspector Coles got to his desk every morning at 9 sharp. It was his rule to get routine business out of the way before 11 o'clock. His secretary never made appointments for him before that hour.

But this morning, Friday—he appeared at 9:30.

"Detective O'Hara to see you, sir. He says it's very important. I told him you were busy but he—"

"Send him in," interrupted Inspector Coles. While he waited for Joe he sat very still and he looked like an old man.

"Well, son?" he said quietly when Joe appeared.

"I've made some progress, sir," said Detective O'Hara.

"Good, good! Sit down and tell me about it."

Joe sat down and told about it. All of it. When he finished, the Old Man cleared his throat.

"Well, son, officially, I'm sorry about this. I'd hoped we could make some arrests soon. But personally, to tell you the truth, I'm delighted. I could see you felt pretty strongly about this young lady and—well, O'Hara, I congratulate you. When's the wedding?"

"I'm afraid it's a little early for that, sir," Detective O'Hara said.

"What's that?"

"Yes, sir, I'm still not satisfied. A job like this—with the Army involved—well, it's not the kind of job where you'd want to take any chances of your personal feelings influencing you. And jewelry isn't the only racket in the world."

Silence for a moment. Then the Old Man said quietly, "I see. Did you have something special in mind?"

"Yes, sir." And Joe told the Old Man what he had in mind. As he outlined his plan, quietly and concisely, he didn't let himself think about Barb. He thought about soldiers instead. Soldiers, sailors and marines. He thought of the kind of break they were entitled to.

But he also thought if—please God—he was wrong—if Barb walked through this trap too, he'd be the happiest cop on the force. The happiest man in the world. The very happiest.

"I like the way you work, O'Hara,"



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the Old Man told him, when he finished talking. "I'm glad I assigned you to this."

It was probably the warmest praise the Old Man had given anyone in twenty years. Joe felt his face turning scarlet.

"Now get moving," the Old Man said suddenly, "and I'll take care of things at this end. What time did you say you're shopping for the furniture?"

"I'm meeting her at noon," Detective O'Hara said, "for lunch. At a place on the corner of Forty-Eighth and Sixth. We'll start shopping after lunch, leaving from there."

"All right. Don't worry about anything."

Joe didn't worry. What was the use by then? He prayed a little, and during lunch he watched Barby's lovely face with hunger and after lunch, as they went shopping, he watched it with mixed emotions.

THE shopping took a long time. Barby was very hard to please. This bedroom suite was too big, and that was too small. She didn't like maple. The mahogany wasn't well built.

But at a little place near Fifth Avenue everything seemed to please her. The prices weren't low, but as Barby said, it was a lifetime investment. They took a bedroom suite in maple after all. And a small carved chest for the hall. A dining room table, with six chairs to match, and an overstuffed sofa and chair. The

manager's name was Bigelow. He smiled ecstatically when Joe paid cash for the works. He said the stuff would be delivered to Barby's apartment within the week.

All the way home Barby talked about how nice it would look. Her eyes were big and soft as she kept laughing her warm childish laugh.

They made a date for the next Saturday. To meet at Barby's place.

Barby's last words were: "And wait till you see what it looks like! All the new furniture will be there for them! And I'm making the nicest new gold curtains for the living room."

Joe said he could hardly wait. He kissed her with a very special kiss. He waited till late Saturday afternoon to send his telegram. He said simply that he was being shipped unexpectedly, but he'd send her his address as soon as he could. And he loved her.

Yes, he loved her. He loved her enough so that he had to get drunk, over the week end, to stand it. He loved her enough to pray, which he hadn't done since he was a kid, and to remember part of a poem he'd read at school, something he'd never done before.

The poem said: "I could not love thee, dear, so much, loved I not honor more."

That about summed it up for Joe. There was one thing he loved more than he loved Barby. The poet called that thing honor. Joe would have

called it giving the Army a break. Maybe, if everything turned out all right, he could explain that to her. Maybe he could quote the poem to her, and she'd understand.

If everything turned out all right. If it turned out he'd imagined that veiled greedy look in her eyes, when they were buying furniture.

If it turned out, like a magazine story. Magazine stories always had happy endings. While in real life—

On Wednesday Inspector Coles personally telephoned Joe at his boarding house. They talked for about ten minutes. And then Joe took the subway to Brooklyn.

To see him, sitting in the subway, you could never have read his thoughts. He just looked a grim cop, or a tired boy, depending on your point of view. Not in the least like the hero who'd chosen honor above love. Not even like a young man in the throes of his first real heartbeat.

TO BARBY EUSTACE he certainly didn't look like a hero, or an idealist. He didn't even look like a sucker any more. He looked, for the first time, like a cop.

Which was natural, considering that he wore his own uniform—his cop's uniform.

That made everything much simpler of course. When Barby opened the door he didn't have to explain. She took a long, long look, and turned slowly very pale. And then she said without any special emotion: "I might have known."

She didn't try to stop him coming in. Only her roommate, the gaunt girl who called herself Jean, jumped up with a smothered oath.

Jean glanced around her, like a rat in a trap—Joe had seen that look on other faces, often—and then made a dash for the door.

Joe stretched out one massive arm and checked her. She shrielled something at him and tried to duck under the arm, and then Barby spoke for the first time. In that careless slurred inflection that Joe had learned to love: "Skip it, Jean. What's the use?"

"You!" Jean turned to her roommate, babbling with rage: "You got us into this. I told you—"

"You told me what?" Barby said, with infinite bitterness. "You told me to play it easy, safe. So I played it safe. Forty different ways. I even told him about that runaway kid. He was too smart for us, that's all. What's the percentage in beeping now?"

Jean said something unpleasant to Barby. Then she said something worse to Joe. Then she went and sat down—in a shabby old armchair.

All this time Joe just stood there. Every time his eyes rested on Barby's lovely flower-like face it was like the tightening of a vise inside him. Finally he made himself stop looking at her. He looked instead at the furniture—the shabby old furniture that should have been "in storage."

He said quietly, in his official voice:

"If you girls feel like talking, it'll make things easier. But you don't have to talk. We've got all we need on you anyway."

"Yeah, you've got what you need. Fine stuff! A copper tricking an innocent girl!" This, furiously, from Jean. Barb turned to her, flatly: "Shut up." She turned to Joe. "What have you got?" she asked pleasantly.

Joe recited, in his official voice: "I had us tailed while we bought the furniture. I had an operative mark the set I bought. When it was returned for a refund after you thought I shipped out, your friend, Mr. Bigelow, talked his head off. He knows plenty and he scares easy, and we had the goods on him. Now we've got enough on all of you to put you away. We've even got the real angle on your out-of-town work. Getting engaged to soldiers in army camps, where there aren't any decent stores around. Ordering stuff from New York. Not only furniture. Bigelow knows some other angles too. And he's turning State's evidence. Your pal Martha's bought and returned thirty-five thousand dollars worth of rings in eighteen months. For a sixty per cent cut. Through the Ace Jeweler, on Nassau Street. Martha's line is furs. You're strictly furniture because you specialize in the sweet home girl act. Want to hear more?"

"No thanks," said Barbara coolly,

"that's good enough for me." Her shoulders drooped a little and she was very pale. Suddenly she lifted her face and laughed—it was an odd, tinny little laugh.

"And I thought I knew men," she said.

"You thought—!" Jean spat, from her corner.

"I'd have sworn—" Barb said, almost dreamily. Then she looked at Joe. She looked at him very hard, straight in the eyes. "Why—" she said unbelievably, "why—I was right all the time! You were nuts about me, weren't you? Crazy nuts!"

Joe said nothing. "You still are," said Barb very softly. There was a flame of pink in each of her cheeks.

Joe still said nothing. "Well," said Barb slowly. "Well, I'll be—I thought I'd seen everything. Say, this job hasn't been any bed of roses, for you, copper, has it?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Joe slowly, "parts of it were all right."

Barb chuckled, as she reached for her hat and coat. The chuckle was neither childish nor warm.

"I'll bet you had some sleepless nights," she said. "I'll bet you'd give your right arm now to let me go."

"Oh, I wouldn't say that," Joe told her. "I wouldn't say that at all."

He saw the Old Man later that day. When he finished his report—down to

the last detail, the Old Man with his eyes averted used words almost like Barb's:

"It's been a tough assignment for you, O'Hara."

"It had its tough moments, sir. But you know, there was a lot of satisfaction in making the arrest."

"Is that so?" the Old Man mumbled. He kept his eyes away from Joe. It was obvious he didn't believe him.

Joe wanted badly to explain. He wondered what the Old Man would say if he quoted poetry to him. About honor and love. He decided the Old Man wouldn't care for any. So he shut up.

The Old Man said a lot, for him, about what a swell job Joe had done. You couldn't help but see how sorry he felt for Joe.

But on the way out of his office Joe had to smile. He was thinking there was one good side to this business. Because the worse it hurt to think about Barb—and it still hurt bad—the more, he knew, he was saving some other poor sucker.

He was thinking that if he hadn't had his own heart kicked around, he might never have realized what he was saving the other guys. The soldiers, sailors and marines.

He was thinking it was a funny world.

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Problem Child

Continued from page 15

Lora already. He had hinted about this to Mrs. Morgan, who'd said she guessed Lora just hadn't met the right one. With all the young men of the neighborhood gone into the Army, he had a clear field. Something you didn't often find in Alaska. But these engineers!

Thinking about the engineers got Bert worked up until he hurled the flowers under the bed.

Yesterday's bouquet was under the bed, too. Mrs. Morgan would be wondering what all those flowers were doing under there.

Bert sat on the bed for awhile longer. It was more than an hour to dinner-time. He got his casting rod from the closet.

Lora and Mrs. Morgan were still on the porch, and Bert grinned sheepishly at them as he went past.

MRS. MORGAN had two rowboats which she kept at a little river dock for her roomers to use. One boat was made of sheet metal, the other one was a heavy, square, punt type that was as hard to row as a log. Bert liked the easy-rowing tin boat. But he didn't get it this time.

An angry little girl's voice squaled at him, making him jump. "Be still, doggone you!" it said.

It was Susan, the 10-year-old sister who lived with Lora. Susan was in the metal boat, a thin little towhead with a cane fishing pole.

"You're scaring the fish!" Susan yelled.

"You're not putting them to sleep yourself, hollering like that," Bert said. "Catching any?"

Evidently Susan's luck wasn't good. "Are you going to splash around here with that old casting rod?" she demanded belligerently.

"Wasn't figuring on it. How about letting me use the tin boat?" Bert asked, feeling self-conscious.

"Use the other one!" Susan shouted. "I got this one first." In an even louder voice, she screamed, "Lora, he's trying to take my boat away from me!"

Embarrassed, Bert climbed into the other boat, the one that rowed like a log. That Susan, some pill!

Bert rowed some distance up the river before he got over feeling uncomfortable. He and Susan certainly didn't hit it off, and he couldn't understand it. Susan was friendly enough with Mrs. Morgan and the other two elderly gentlemen roomers. But whenever Bert came around, Susan acted like Mrs. Morgan's tabby cat when somebody stepped on its tail.

The river was pleasant in the late sunshine. The river banks made a quick jump up from the tan water to

the rolling hills that were green and rich with untouched forest. Down the river, the scenery was not quite as nice, so Bert never went downriver to fish.

Bert tied a plug on his line and whipped off a long cast. He could see Lora, in her yellow dress, on the porch. He knew just how she looked, although at that distance it was mostly his imagination. She was a picture in his mind.

Later he caught a fish, a nice one, a four-pounder. It made him feel better to walk in before dinner and give it to Mrs. Morgan.

"Some fish, Bert," said Mrs. Morgan. "It'll be good for breakfast."

After dinner, Lora went off with Mrs. Morgan in the car to visit a neighbor. Bert tried to work on his electrical engineering correspondence course, but he couldn't get his mind on it.

He had been rooming at Mrs. Morgan's two weeks, and the very first day Lora Andrews had taken his breath. He'd learned a lot about her from Mrs. Morgan; that Lora's father had owned a trading steamer, that Lora had gone to school in Seattle and Ketchikan, and had lived on the steamer with her folks. The trading steamer had sounded big to Bert, but Mrs. Morgan told him it had been a small boat. The Japs had sunk it, and Lora's father and mother had lost their lives. Now Lora had a nice job at the Highway office. Mrs. Morgan liked Lora, and that meant a lot, because Bert had found out Mrs. Morgan wasn't easy to please.

But up to now, Bert hadn't even started for first base with Lora. Three weeks he'd been there, and that was a long time. It was an age, the way Bert felt about Lora. And those darn engineers were coming.

The next day, Bert got the ice broken. Even then it was by accident. It was right after dinner.

"Bert," said Mrs. Morgan, "Lora's radio is out of whack. Can you fix it?"

"I'll be glad to try," Bert said.

"Oh, no, please, I wouldn't think of being such trouble," Lora protested.

"No trouble at all."

They went up to Lora's room. Everything was neat. "It just squawks and squawks," Lora explained.

The radio was a granddad of radios. Bert examined it. "I'll get a screwdriver out of my kit," he said, "and balance her up. We'll see what that does."

The balancing fixed it up. Lora was delighted. "Why, you're a radio expert."

"Not much of a one," said Bert, grinning.

"But you fixed it. It sounds wonderful."

"Wasn't much wrong. But I'm studying up for the tough ones. Just a correspondence course, but there's some good stuff in it."

Bert had found his tongue. He explained that some of the apparatus at the C.A.A. aircraft communicator station was really something. The radio

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signals had to be good, because they beamed in a lot of plane traffic these days, planes following that string of new airports along the new road.

Bert's tongue was going as if it were tied in the middle and loose at both ends.

"Are you doing anything special tonight?" he asked, while he had up momentum.

"Why, no, nothing special," said Lora.

"I noticed there's a movie at the post that sounds good. Would you care to go? We could take Susan."

Lora smiled. "Why, I'd like that. And Susan will be crazy to go. She's a great one for movies."

But when they were ready to leave, Lora reported with somewhat amused wonder, "Susan didn't want to go."

"She sick or something?" asked Bert.

Lora shook her head. "Said she wasn't. I don't know what got into her."

That Susan, Bert thought. What put her down on me, anyhow? Bert felt self-conscious about it, the way he often felt around kids.

Lora wore a blue ribbon around her hair, with a bow on top, pert and lovely. Her dress was blue, and her gloves and purse and slippers were white. Bert couldn't get enough of stealing looks at her.

The show was good. Lora laughed even more than Bert. They had sodas at the post, and Bert took a couple of chances on a punchboard. He won a gay little pottery dog and put it in his pocket. Later, as they were walking home, he presented the dog to Lora with the formal little speech he'd composed. Bert got a kick out of it when Lora fell into the spirit and made a formal speech of acceptance.

Later in the week Bert and Lora went along with Mrs. Morgan in her car to buy some peaches for canning. On the way back they ate peaches, laughing when the juice ran down their chins.

They got to taking a little row up the river almost every evening. Often Bert fished while Lora sat in the stern, arms clasped around her knees, and they talked quietly.

Susan refused to go with them. Bert made a point of asking Susan along. But the kid wasn't even civil.

"Okay," Bert said, puzzled. "Okay for you."

It worried him because he noticed that Lora wasn't laughing at Susan's refusals to go with them, the way Lora had laughed at it in the beginning.

Once in awhile Lora would insist on taking over the oars. Bert was astonished at the way she could handle a rowboat. "I never saw the like," he said admiringly.

"Why, I grew up on a boat," Lora told him. "Cap, my father, was owner of an eighty-foot cargo boat. Carried goods up the inland passage and up the Alaska rivers. Cap and Mom and we kids lived on the boat a lot. Some-

times we'd spend the winter in Seattle, but I didn't like it there as well."

"I'll bet," said Bert uneasily, "that you met a lot of handsome fellows down there."

"None of them seemed to amount to anything to me, Bert," Lora said. "Oh, they were nice. But you know."

"That sounds like the life," Bert said, reverting to her story of life on the boat, in his relief.

"It was glorious." Then a faraway look came to Lora's face. "I kind of miss it. You see, it was only a year ago Cap and Mom were killed."

"How did that happen?" Bert asked gently.

"A Jap submarine shelled and sank their boat," Lora told him.

Those Japs, Bert thought savagely. But were fixing their clock for them, all right.

"I wish Susan had been older, or younger, when Cap and Mom were taken," Lora said slowly. "It hit Susan so hard. So awful hard, somehow."

"She is just at the wrong age to take a blow like losing her folks," Bert said.

Lora nodded soberly. "If she had only been a baby, so she wouldn't know what it meant. Or older, so she would understand that such a thing has to happen to everybody sometime. But the way she is, a little girl, she took it hard. She's still taking it hard. She cries a lot at night, when I'm not around. I think she still feels frightened and lost."

They were silent, looking down the river. Behind the hills, the sun was a sinking glory.

Bert had intended to ask Lora to marry him this evening. But Susan, it seemed to him, had come between them. He did not quite understand it. But he sat there in the boat, and he knew that now was not the time to speak.

Bert didn't eat much dinner that night. And then he lay awake and worried, without knowing exactly what was worrying him.

The next night he had to work late. The house was dark when he got in and he supposed everybody was in bed. Mrs. Morgan had left his dinner in the warming oven.

He ate, then took off his shoes and went upstairs silently, so as not to awaken anyone. That was how he happened to hear sobbing in Lora's room.

Bert stopped, thinking it was Lora sobbing. But it wasn't. It was Susan.

"But Susan," Bert heard Lora say. "This is such a nice place. Why do you want to leave?"

Susan blubbered away.

"Susan, it's Bert isn't it? You want to go, away because you don't like Bert?" Lora said, and her voice sounded desperate.

Susan just kept making the whooping and snuffling that a kid makes when crying.

"I don't know what to do," Lora said. "Oh, Susan, you're everything to me. Don't cry, darling, please don't. I'll do anything to make you happy."

The way Lora spoke frightened



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Bert. He crept on to his room and sat on the bed for a long time. He felt as if an ax had been chopping at his happiness.

Bert and Lora had a date for the next evening. It did not take long for Bert to see that neither of them was having a very good time. There was a kind of restraint, as if they were both acting.

It was not long before Bert became so distraught he had to do something.

They walked home on the river path, past the schoolhouse, not finding much to say to each other. Far away a wolf was yapping at a bright glorious moon, and on the river the ducks that were spending the summer quacked contentedly.

"Lora," Bert tried to say, but what he wanted to say meant so much to Bert that the word was hardly audible.

"Lora," Bert said. This time strain made his voice burst out, like a scared rabbit.

"Lora, I like you a lot," Bert said. "Lora, I—my love is bigger than this river. Lora, darling, would you marry me?"

Lora looked away slowly. Inside Bert's chest there was a falling.

"Bert, I kept hoping you wouldn't ask me," Lora said miserably.

"How come? Why, Lora?"

Lora looked away, at the river. "I wish you wouldn't ask me to tell you, Bert. Not now. Maybe I wouldn't get the words right, and you wouldn't understand. Maybe my reason would not seem a big enough reason. I wouldn't want you feeling that way, Bert. I wouldn't want you to think I was taking you lightly."

"Lora, it's not some other fellow?"

"No, Bert, it isn't that at all."

"Well," Bert said, "if you'd rather not talk about it—"

"Please, I don't want to, Bert."

"I love you," Bert said. "I want you to know that."

"I know you do." And Bert could tell there were tears in her eyes.

Bert knew that the trouble was Susan, and he felt defeated and helpless because he had done everything he could think of to make up with Susan. He didn't blame Lora. Susan, the poor distraught little tyke, had no one but Lora. Lora had to look out for her.

THE next morning Bert tried to enlist in the Navy.

"You again," they said at the recruiting office. "Mad at the Japs again, are you?"

"I'm mad at Japs all the time," Bert said. "Why won't you guys let me enlist? What's the matter with you, anyway?"

They explained it to Bert again patiently. "Aircraft communicators up here in the Eighth Region, which is Alaska, are indispensable men. You're frozen on the job. Anyway, you're practically seeing action. You got a shot at a Jap plane with a rifle, didn't you? Why, lots of soldiers and sailors haven't even got a shot at a Jap yet."

Bert did not ask Lora for another

date. He could not have stood it. They would just have been miserable.

Bert bought an outboard motor. The outboard was an extravagance, but he'd always wanted one. He bought it to help occupy his mind. It was second-hand, from a trapper who had taken a defense job.

The outboard drove Mrs. Morgan's tin rowboat flying over the river. But Bert didn't get much kick out of it.

He took long, tense, grim rides in the metal rowboat with the outboard roaring at the stern.

But the outboard motor didn't do a thing to get Lora out of his mind. Nothing could get Lora out of his thoughts. Without Lora, nothing was going to have much value to him.

The crew of highway engineers showed up. Just as Bert expected, some of them were handsome, smooth articles. Two of the best-looking ones roomed at Mrs. Morgan's. But Lora did not go out with them. She turned them down. Somehow this did not make Bert feel any less miserable.

"I guess," Bert told Mrs. Morgan, "I'll be leaving after Saturday."

"Leaving!" Mrs. Morgan threw up both hands. "Land sakes! Leaving! Don't you like it here?"

"I'm transferred to another job," Bert said, which wasn't the truth. But he could get transferred.

It rained hard that night, and Bert lay and listened to the hard, insistent patter of the rain on the roof. Leave . . . that was all he could do, that was the only fair thing for Lora. Susan would be happy then, and Lora, too, after awhile.

The next evening, Bert took a last ride with the outboard motor. The sky was cloudy, promising another rain any minute, and the river was muddy from last night's downpour.

He went down the river. Always before, because he liked the scenery upstream, he had gone up the river. He frowned at the water, his chin in his hands, the boat drifting. He had never dreamed a man could feel so miserable.

There was a whoop of thunder overhead. Bert looked up. Going to rain right away. He got up to start the motor.

He saw Susan then. Susan was walking home from school. It was about a mile.

Probably Bert would have let Susan walk on, but just then there was another big gobble of thunder in the sky.

"Susan!" Bert yelled. "Come on. Get in the boat. Going to rain, but we can beat it home."

Susan stopped unwillingly, looking at the overcast sky.

"Come on, come on!" Bert shouted. "You want to get soaked?"

The child climbed into the boat. With Susan on the front seat and Bert in the stern, they howled for home.

The motor made a great racket. Susan's eyes were bright, for she was intrigued by the noise and speed. Bert thought that must be the reason she had come along.

Then they hit the snag.

There was a hard impact, a cutting sound. The outboard stopped.

They were more than a hundred feet from the bank. This was Bert's first time on this part of the river. He'd heard it was deep down here. He sure wished he'd known more about the river here.

Muddy river water poured up through a large hole which the snag had torn in the bottom of the boat. Bert stared at the inrush, while horror took hold of him.

"You hurt, Susan?" Bert asked.

"No," she replied uncertainly. Then, terror in her voice, "We're sinking!"

"Take it easy," Bert said. He could tell the kid was scared.

BERT stood up. The water was already so high it poured in the tops of his shoes. "We got us a shipwreck, Susan," he said.

He wondered if his face was getting pale.

The makers of tin rowboats build buoyancy compartments in the bow and under the stern seat so the boats will float. But someone had taken the floats out of this old boat.

"Susan," Bert said, fighting to keep his voice steady. "Susan, she won't float. But you take it easy, darling."

There was one life preserver seat cushion, but it was old. Bert picked it up and put it in the water to see how much it would support. It would hold Susan. But not both of them.

There was nothing in the boat that would hold up Bert. The oars were so old and waterlogged they wouldn't support a rabbit.

"Here you are. Here, sweetheart."

Bert moved to Susan's side with the buoyant seat cushion.

Bert's heart was in his throat because the sinking boat wanted to turn turtle.

"Put your arms through the loops," Bert said. His voice was steady, but his hands shook. "There, there now. Now you just paddle to the bank. Nothing to it, sweetheart."

"How'll you get to the bank?" Susan asked.

"Me? Oh, I'll swim," Bert said. "Don't worry about me, pal."

"How deep is the water?"

"I don't know," said Bert. "Kind of deep, I heard."

The river was beginning to spill over the edge of the boat.

"Don't bother to look around, dear," Bert said. "You just paddle to the bank."

He eased the slight, childish frame into the water and pushed her shoreward as hard as he could. She paddled valiantly.

Then Bert turned away. He did not want Susan to see his face if she looked back. He didn't try to strike out for himself. Best to stay where he was, then the kid wouldn't see him drown.

The boat sank. The water came up Bert's legs with a cold rush. Up past his knees, past his thighs, past his waist. God! Who ever said it was easy to die?

The water stopped rising. The boat did not sink any more. It was breast deep, that was all.

The river was shallow here. The muddy water had hidden that fact.

When Bert understood that the river was only this deep, he had a sensation that was a mixture of incredulity, joy and sheepishness.

It was strange, but his next thought was: I've made a fool out of myself. Only I don't give a darn. I was just too dumb to measure the water with an oar. But I don't mind.

It was indeed an unusual sensation. It was fine. Why, thought Bert, I don't mind making a fool out of myself. I'm not embarrassed. I don't feel tied up. I feel all free and easy.

Striding toward the bank, he laughed heartily at himself. "I thought the water was twenty feet deep," he called.

But Susan, perched on a log on the grassy bank by this time, didn't laugh. Susan wasn't laughing tonight. Susan's eyes were awfully wide.

"You can't swim a lick, can you?" Susan said.

Bert grinned and clambered up beside her. "That's right. But we won't tell anybody. We'll keep it a secret, what do you say?"

Susan grinned too. "Sure," she said, freckled face alight. "Sure, Bert."

What do you know, the kid admires me, Bert thought. Susan likes me. She just started liking me this minute.

Susan was liking him because she felt he was entirely different now. He knew that was it. He had changed. Maybe getting so scared there a minute ago, when he thought the water was deep, had done the changing. Anyhow, he wasn't self-conscious. He'd lost that.

Bert realized he saw things differently. Susan wasn't a pill. Why, he'd been afraid of Susan. Too self-conscious to try to make friends. No wonder she hadn't thought much of him.

Bert laughed uproariously at himself.

"Susan, I guess I got off on the wrong foot with you," he said. "I was kind of afraid of little girls. But we're going to be pals now, you bet."

"You bet we are, Bert."

Bert felt great.

"You better run for home and change those wet things before dinner," he said. "I bet you can run fast enough to beat the rain yet."

Susan ran happily for the house.

Bert hauled the damaged boat to the bank, laughing at himself.

He was soaked when he got to the house. He opened the front door and put his head in, intending to ask Mrs. Morgan to bring him some dry clothes so he could change in the woodshed.

Lora was the first one he saw. It was a heck of a thing to be sopping wet and taking a girl in your arms and kissing her, Bert thought. Lora didn't raise any objections, though.

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A slow rhythm began to pulsate through the hush. Around Phyllis there wrapped itself a radiant yet sorrow-laden cloud, a sadness which her heart of youth was just able to bear. And for her—for her alone—the sound of the plaintive whisper of the baritone voice.

I Heard You Cried Last Night, it sang, every nuance going poignantly into Phyllis's being; every heart-broken pause pressing down on her—an ache which, not for all the world, would she have missed. Somehow, he must know she was there!

And he was so young and frail-looking! He could never sing like this unless he had a load of troubles! He was unburdening himself of them—and unburdening her of hers.

You'll Never Know was his next. Tears of thankfulness for his understanding, for his knowing that everyone carries a secret sorrow, welled up in Phyllis's eyes.

In the stampe of yells and shrill whistling which followed, Phyllis sat motionless. The air was torn by feminine shrieks, as the autograph hounds got on the trail.

"Going to try to get his autograph?" asked Michael.

She hadn't even realized that Michael was still next to her.

"I don't want my clothes torn off my back!" She laughed, oddly all full of tears inside. "I've written to him for his picture. Maybe he'll send me one by and by."

THEY made their way to the glare of the street, the spell of Frank Sinatra still possessing them, so that they spoke little.

"Gosh, I'm starved!" Michael said. "No lunch!"

"I didn't even have breakfast!"

"What about doughnuts and coffee?"

They sat at a counter, eating doughnuts and drinking coffee.

"This is Dutch," Phyllis said, as Michael's hand went into his pocket. "I asked you," he said.

"No. It's Dutch."

Phyllis meant to take the 5:32. Michael said he'd walk to the station with her. They'd have to hurry.

They crossed Times Square, and they did hurry as far as Sixth Avenue, where their feet began to lag as though trying to hold time back. For they felt that they were just beginning to find each other. At Fifth Avenue, they let the traffic lights change twice before they proceeded.

"A couple of hicks!" Michael laughed. And as they walked slowly on, "He gets you, doesn't he? I'll tell you why he gets me—I mean, I'll try—it's sort of complicated. There're lots of things I want—I mean—I know I want them, but I couldn't tell you what they are—just—well—things. Maybe it's places I want to see. But I guess you don't get me."

"Oh, I do!" Phyllis cried. Yet perhaps she didn't, quite. She felt, though, his longings, vague yet so deep. And above all the vast longing to be understood. Oh, Frankie knew how often

you felt yourself all alone in the world! Michael was saying, "Some kids, he works up till they're kind of wild. But it's not that way with me."

"With me, either," Phyllis said quietly.

"How does he get you?" Michael asked.

Very nearly, Phyllis answered, "He helps me bear my troubles." But Michael might ask what were her troubles, and although he was the kind of boy you could tell your troubles to easily, she did not know him well enough yet. You don't tell family troubles just like that. You just don't!

Her eyes again grew moist.

She missed the 5:32. The next train was at 6:24.

"Oh, dear!" she exclaimed. She'd be late for dinner. Maybe she'd better telephone. But she wasn't expected for dinner; she was supposed to be at Leida's. She'd take the 8:10, as she had said. Her bitterness of the morning surged back. "I don't want to see them!" she cried to herself. "They'll tell me, and I don't want to hear it!" But she held out a hand to Michael.

"Don't let me keep you. I'll just wait around here for my train. It's been awfully nice knowing you." She did not intend to remain in the station. She'd have dinner alone, somewhere. But she couldn't tell Michael; he might be embarrassed, think he should take her to dinner—and not go Dutch. No, she couldn't have that!

"I'm in no rush," he said, with his sweet smile. "I don't have to get home. My father's away—he manages a defense plant up in Connecticut—and my stepmother, she doesn't even know I'm around."

Phyllis gazed at him, her heart flooded with compassion. Now she knew, better than any words could have told her, what Frank Sinatra did for Michael.

"I needn't take the six-twenty-four." She found that she wanted to be with Michael awhile longer. "Let's go for a walk, shall we? I'll take the eighten."

"Then don't you want to eat first?—Say, I've got a swell idea! What about some chop suey? Do you like chop suey?"

"I adore it!—if we go Dutch."

A flush spread over his sallow face. He mumbled, "Okay, if that's how you want it."

A flush spread over Phyllis's face, too. She hoped she hadn't hurt him.

IN THE train Phyllis sat with closed eyes under which were dark rings of fatigue. Her mouth was a small red stain in the whiteness of her face. The car lights were a dull yellow, and whenever Phyllis opened her eyes for a moment she saw the tired, colorless faces of her fellow passengers. They looked unreal, unsubstantial. She could scarcely believe in her own reality.

The train slid through the night. For Phyllis it was a night of bottomless depths, with the wheels under her beating out, rhythmically,

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"Twelve fifty-eight! Twelve fifty-eight! Late, late—twelve fifty-eight!"

In an out-of-the-way little Chinese place, with pagodas and funny, humped bridges painted on the dingy walls, they had sat on, Michael and she, talking, talking, endlessly talking. They had really come to know each other; and the need to tell Michael everything had made a pressure in her heart. But she hadn't told him. She was aware of time passing, and from time to time she would think of the 8:10. Then the bitterness would return; and she did not want, yet, to go home.

Michael told her he planned to become a flier. If the war lasted, he'd try to make the air force. Anyway, he'd go in for commercial flying after the war. Phyllis looked at him. He was warm with ardor. She gazed at the pagodas and bridges and feathery trees on the walls, and thought of distances, of escape, of skies high above the earth.

She missed the 8:10. What did she care?

Under her, now, the wheels beat it out: "Twelve fifty-eight, twelve fifty-eight—late, late—twelve fifty-eight!"

Lights along the way seemed buried in blackness. The phantom train paused at phantom stations, and then the wheels took up the beat all over again.

Her eyes shut once more, Phyllis let the fantasy of the evening pour through her. A warm evening, sprayed with white, orange, blue, green, yellow, ruby lights, every one of them a jewel or an exotic blossom. A haze was drawn over the stars. The buildings, their feet bathed in glow, rose darker and darker in their climb toward the heavens.

With Phyllis missing the 8:10, as she had subconsciously meant to miss it, they could keep on walking and walking. It seemed they had still so much to say to each other! They wanted a quieter place to say it all in. So they worked out of the human swarm weaving and shuffling along Broadway and found themselves wandering in

sleeping, dimly lit, quiet streets.

The 10:40 was the next train—

"Twelve fifty-eight, late, late!"

Phyllis had known all the while that she'd miss the 10:40 also. Let them wait for her! Or perhaps they wouldn't wait up, and she'd glide secretly to her room without having to see them. If Aunt Ruth began telling her about that, she'd scream.

Only when you were with someone your own age, like Michael, were you not alone.

Third Avenue lowered grimly in the darkness. They went into a dully lighted drug store for cokes, Michael having said, "Gosh, I've been talking so much, I'm all dry!"

"Same here!" Phyllis laughed. Not taking the 10:40 had made her feel giddy, though her feet were tired from all the tramping about.

"This is on me!" Michael said sternly. He ordered large cokes—10-cent ones—and Phyllis let him pay for them. He was tired and pale, too, and with his polka dot bow tie he looked very much like Frank Sinatra, only younger, Phyllis thought.

BRYANT PARK! That was where they next found themselves, sitting in the loom of the library. There was no time; unless comfort, deep and pervasive, was time. They stopped talking, at last, save for the words which went on in the profound depths of their senses, their awareness of each other. It was sweet to think that Michael, whom she had met only today, did not want to let her go.

"I must go, I must!" she waived to herself. "But he doesn't want me to! Am I ever going to see him again?"

Padding feet went by the bench where they sat. Gray wraiths of figures passed. Sometimes the dim disc of a face turned toward them with curiosity.

The bonds of troubled youth were woven stronger and stronger. Michael's arm stole shyly around her waist, and with a little sigh she let her head rest against his shoulder. She was weary, very weary. This was so good! Somehow she knew that Michael was thinking of Frank Sinatra, as she was.

Her head on Michael's shoulder, she looked up through the leaves of an elm at the stars gleaming distantly. It would be good to stay like this forever and ever.

But it was the 12:58 which she finally knew must break the dream. She went toward it, with resentment in her heart.

At the gate, Michael said, "I'd like to see you sometime." His voice had a note of hopelessness.

My gracious, why should he sound so sunk? A rush of something maternal nearly made Phyllis kiss him. Not once, even with her head on his shoulder, had he tried to kiss her.

Hastily, they exchanged addresses. The last thing she said to him was, "You come up some Wednesday and have dinner, and I'll take you to the Frank Sinatra Club!"

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"Gee!" Michael cried, his face all shining.

The last she saw of him, through the gate, he was sprinting across the marble wave of station.

The wheels went, "Twelve fifty-eight—" But now Phyllis did not hear them, as she wondered whether, after all, Michael would come.

"Greendale!" the conductor bawled. "Greendale, next stop!"

Phyllis ran through the streets. Here and there a light shone, a light which looked ready for slumber. Her resentment, her dread, warned her not to run. She ran, with a sense of how terribly late the hour was. She felt bedraggled, her happiness seeping swiftly out of her. She longed to go to sleep, and sleep and sleep. Only the thought of Michael would make the morning bearable.

There were lights in the house. They were up! She walked draggingly along the path, her feet crunching the gravel, her mouth aquiver. The irises were pale—Iris ghosts.

It was Uncle Bill who flung open the door, before Phyllis found her key. The oblong of illumination fell out on her, and she made an involuntary step backwards.

"Where've you been?" Uncle Bill shouted. He looked awful. "Where've you been?" he shouted again, as Phyllis came slowly into the hall. Behind him, she saw Aunt Ruth, who looked just as awful.

"Phyllis!" Aunt Ruth cried.

Phyllis could not feel sorry for either of them. Her mouth was tight and hard. She did not even try to say anything, but made straight for the stairs. Uncle Bill clutched her wrist, his nervous fingers hurting her.

"You weren't at Leida's! We called there!"

"We woke Mrs. Phelps up at midnight!" Aunt Ruth cried.

Phyllis tore her wrists out of Uncle Bill's grasp. "No, I wasn't at Leida's!" Her face blazed with defiance. Then, with a burst of tears, she fled into the living room and threw herself on the couch, her face buried in her arms.

She felt Aunt Ruth trying to stroke away the sobs which shook her from head to foot. Now and then she jerked her body to make Aunt Ruth stop the stroking, but it went on.

"Tell us where you've been!" said Uncle Bill, hoarsely. "Don't you know better than to frighten the life out of your aunt? And out of me?"

"I was with someone—we had dinner—and cokes—and we walked, miles and miles—and then we sat in the park—" Phyllis wept.

"Who was it, Phyllis?" asked Aunt Ruth, still stroking her.

"A boy—"

"What boy?" Uncle Bill demanded. "I met him in the theater."

"That's all right," Aunt Ruth quickly put in, to check an outburst from Uncle Bill.

The outburst was not to be checked. "You meet a strange boy in a theater, and you sit half the night in a park with him! You let us go out of our

minds, and you don't even think of phoning!"

Phyllis sat up. "Why should I have phoned?"

"Why—should—you have phoned?" Uncle Bill gasped. "Couldn't you imagine how we felt?"

"Wait, Bill," Aunt Ruth said. "You don't care how I feel!" Phyllis cried.

Uncle Bill began to move wildly about the room. "This is what comes of that—that—bleater!" he roared. "All you kids lose your sanity when that—that Pied Piper—that bleating Pied Piper—" He could not go on, but ended with a groan.

Phyllis sprang up, white to the lips, hands clenched, screaming, "You—you! He's not a bleater! He—I! You'll never understand! We—we kids—You think we've got no troubles, just because we're kids! You don't know what I feel, when he sings—when he sings— You don't know how it helps me! Oh, you don't know; you don't know—anything!"

Uncle Bill grew strangely quiet. He seemed afraid of something. "Tell me, Phyllis, how do you feel? How does it help?—Maybe I don't understand."

"That's because you don't try!" "I'll try. I want to understand." For Uncle Bill felt that this was very near tragedy, and he groped and groped, his face gray and working. "You mean, you've got some trouble?"

Phyllis burst into a terrible, shattering laugh, and they stared at her. Through her tears she saw their hands meet and hold, like the hands of those who face a common awfulness. She flung herself again on the couch, and her words came muffled, rising and falling with the heave of her breast.

"Oh, no—oh, no! No trouble! Oh, no—oh, no! With Aunt Ruth going to tell me— Oh, no!"

THEN she saw their eyes meet and lock. She saw Uncle Bill waver to the mantel and pick up a pipe. But he put it down again. Phyllis got to her feet and rushed upstairs. She slammed her door. For a minute or two she stood in the dark, her sweet comprehension of Michael, and his of her, slowly calming her. She switched on the light, and Frank Sinatra was there, looking at her with his soulful eyes. She darted to a closet, took out a small victrola and found the records she wanted.

Crouched in a chair, chin on hands, she let it flow through her; My Heart Tells Me, sung in the low, smooth baritone. She changed the record—she'd put it on again later—and in the midst of You'll Never Know, Aunt Ruth entered the room quietly. She said nothing for a long while, sitting on the arm of Phyllis's chair, with an arm around Phyllis's shoulder. At last she said a strange thing:

"I've nothing to tell you, Phyllis."

Phyllis quickly looked up into her face, on which was an unreadable smile. Yet Phyllis saw a difference between that smile and the "brave" one Aunt Ruth had gone about with

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all that dreadful past week. She could not think what the difference was.

How should she know what had transpired between Aunt Ruth and Uncle Bill? How should she know that Uncle Bill, pacing furiously back and forth and blowing clouds of smoke from his pipe, had called himself an old fool? "Just an old fool! Not to realize that that sort of thing must have significance for those kids! What the devil do I know about youngsters, though I should know, with Phyllis here and all the kids she brings into the house! I'm going to tear up those chapters!"

"What chapters?" asked Aunt Ruth, knowing very well.

"The chapters about the children!" "Wait a moment. Are you sure you've done them so badly?" As if she weren't sure, herself!

"Didn't you say so?" Uncle Bill

shouted, coming to a stop before her. "Well, I may be wrong."

"You're not wrong! That's what got me so worked up—knowing you weren't wrong! And anyone who says those children have life in them, is an idiot—like Maude Venner! A drivelling idiot!"

"Well, Bill, you go away, as you said, and think it all over."

"Why should I go away?" Uncle Bill cried. "Can't I think it over here? Unless you want me to go away—"

"Oh, Bill, you are an old fool!"

All this was in Aunt Ruth's smile. Slowly, Phyllis began to feel it there. She dared not speak; it was impossible that it wasn't going to happen. She did not look at Aunt Ruth. Even had she looked at her, she would not have seen her for the blinding tears.

"I think you'd better go to sleep,"

Aunt Ruth said, kissing her head and shivering to think how fully Phyllis

had known! But now there was nothing to know!

"Just one more record," Phyllis said. "I am pretty tired."

Aunt Ruth hovered to listen to Paper Doll.

"He has a very good voice," she remarked.

"I always told you to listen to him. Isn't it just too soulful?"

As soon as her head was on the pillow, Phyllis, with a sigh of exquisite weariness, let herself sink down and down. But suddenly she heard the beat of wheels: "Twelve fifty-eight—" Yet there was something changed, for the wheels said, "Twelve fifty-eight—but not too late! Not too late—twelve fifty-eight!"

With another sigh, Phyllis thought: They understand! Michael!

Then she was asleep.

THE END

Your Girl about Town

Continued from page 55

pieces and saute them for a few minutes in melted butter, add a small onion, well minced, and a package of cream cheese, season with salt and pepper and mix well; then spread on the buttered side of rounds of bread that have been toasted on one side and buttered on the other. Pop under the broiler to brown and serve hot.

People who have had canapes at all the best spots in town tell me it is the best they ever tasted.

Fish Queen

One of the cleverest girls in New York is making money in a strange and smelly business. Ellen Grey, 22, and pretty as a picture, graduated from Rollins College, took a business course, studied cooking and scientific housekeeping, and startled society by opening a Deviled Crab and Lobster Shop, dainty as a boudoir, on swanky Madison Avenue. She does all her own bookkeeping and cooking.

There are two rooms in Ellen's place, and she designed them both—the kitchen, all white, with flowered muslin curtains and lots of shining copper pans, and the shop, pistachio green, with the furniture Ellen had in college. Spring flowers are all over the place.

Her customers are mostly from the Social Register, her crabs entirely from Virginia, and all her lobsters come from Maine. Every day Ellen devils 150 crabs and 25 lobsters. She makes onion and black bean soups and vichyssoise, and she flavors everything

with sherry, which she buys by the barrel.

Ellen says that almost everyone who buys her deviled crabs and lobsters pretends that they are homemade.

"In that way," she says, "the ladies make a hit, and I make money."

Just before Pearl Harbor, with an eye to going into business when she was through college, this enterprising child borrowed money to buy a number of barrels of caviar . . . which she is selling now at \$25 a pound.

"I love being a business woman," Ellen told me, "and I'm terribly glad I thought up this nice, funny business."

Sinatra Hair-Do

Teen-age New York boys, asking themselves, "What has Frankie got that I haven't?" (besides The Voice, of course) are having their hair cut with a long lock that falls loose, and drops over the forehead close to one eye. Along West 52nd Street—called the Street of Swing because there are so many night clubs on it—the new haircut is particularly in vogue.

Boy With Golden Hair

Billy Rose, owner of Broadway's biggest night club, the Diamond Horseshoe, has an original Renoir—a portrait of the artist's nephew, known as The Boy With the Golden Hair. Mrs. Billy Rose, former Olympic swimmer Eleanor Holm, thought it would be a nice idea to have a six-color reproduction of the Renoir portrait made up for the front cover of the menus. Billy agreed with her, and the thing was done.

Then Billy had a note printed on back, inviting customers to take the menu home and frame it for a souvenir. Since Renoir's debut in the Diamond Horseshoe, about 5,000 patrons a week have taken the hint—and the menus.

? ? ? ? ?

Myrus, the Man with the X-ray Eyes, is at the Cotillion Room of the Pierre for his third engagement, and he continues packing them in every night. Myrus—he looks a little like Franchot Tone—came and sat at our table the other night and read everybody's mind in the most amazing fashion.

Myrus asked me to write my parents' names on a piece of paper and to give him the paper. I did as he requested, and he destroyed the paper before my eyes. I could swear he did not look at it. On it I had written their names—James and Sarah.

"Now concentrate," commanded Myrus, "and I will read your mind."

So I concentrated. I concentrated on George and Gertrude—and I concentrated like mad. Not once did I think of James and Sarah.

Presently Myrus said, "Your parents' names were James and Sarah."

Correct! How he knew I cannot imagine. But it was not my mind that Myrus was reading. It was the piece of paper he destroyed.

Recently Myrus visited Johns Hopkins' maternity ward. Passing quickly from one expectant mother to another, he predicted correctly the sex of twenty-six out of thirty-two of their unborn babies.

Myrus says that Roosevelt will continue as President until the end of the war, that he will be succeeded by Wendell Wilkie, that it will take two years of fighting after victory in Europe to defeat Japan, and that Betty Grable's marriage will last.

THE END

Meet Princess Kropotkin, your new Girl About Town, in the June issue of LIFE STORY . . . it's a treat you can't afford to miss . . . she makes the town as friendly as your family dinner table.

LIFE

INVITATION TO SCANDAL

What can a girl do when the sister she has always loved and admired suddenly becomes her mortal enemy . . . because of a man?



Chapter One

IT COULDN'T have been a more perfect day, Julie thought as she looked out of the wide kitchen window and breathed in the warmth and excitement of late September air. She put her elbows, bare under the pushed-up sleeves of her sweater, onto the smooth scrubbed pine of the kitchen table and cradled her coffee cup in both hands. Sunlight, pouring in the open window, lit her face vividly and glistened in her very black hair. Sarah, behind her at the stove, hanging over a great pot of bubbling grape juice, harrumphed sharply as Julie gave a deep sigh of content.

"You better stop mooning out of that window and get started for your errands in the village if that cable means anything," Sarah said in her flat New England voice. Sarah was part of the Edgerton household, in fact the only part since Julie's father's death. She had come into it twenty years ago, just before Julie was born, and she had stayed on.

"I'll bet she gets in today," Julie said in an almost singing voice. Sarah sniffed sharply, mistrustful of any overt expressions of emotion. She looked at Julie guardedly with a protective glance.

"Might be," she said.

"Do you feel she will?" Julie persisted. "Oh, she'll get here," said Sarah. "Always knew where she was going all right, Miss Lily did."

"You know as well as I do that it'll be fun having her," Julie said cajolingly. She turned to the cable propped against the honey pot on the table. It stated that her sister would arrive sometime this week and it was Saturday of the week. She hadn't seen her sister since Lily married John Latimer and went off to live with him in England. Julie had been nine then and Lily was someone out of a fairy tale, Lily the fabulous, lovely, golden creature, with her great strange green eyes, her gaiety fascinating to a child, her flaming tempers and the drama that always surrounded her reckless love of life. And now she was coming back with her husband, who was a member of a British government mission, and the house would once again become as it was with a stir of people in it instead of the dreaming quiet Julie and her father had lived in.

"It'll be just as it used to be, having Lily here, Sarah."

Sarah looked at her as she sat there in her dark sweater and tweed skirt. There was a quick gleam of life in her that gave

her face an almost luminous look of happiness. Her eyes were the same color as Lily's, Sarah mused but they had a gentle tranquility. Her nose was little and quite inconsequential and her mouth, which she smeared generously with the brightest of lipsticks, was the mouth of a child. Her face was not beautiful but had great charm of expression. Julie never could hide her heart.

Sarah's eyes looked away from her through the dining room door to the famous portrait of another Edgerton; this one was a beauty, a flamboyant face with a subtle smile, much more like Lily. The famous Katherine Edgerton who had danced in this very house with Lafayette. Under her portrait were the crossed swords of an Edgerton revolutionary general. And here lolling in the kitchen, playing with a dog and sniffing happily at the Concord grapes boiling on the stove was the last of the Edgertons and the best as far as Sarah was concerned.

"Well, anyway, I feel—," Julie began and then jumped up. "A car's stopping."

"It's Mr. Crosby," said Sarah, going toward the hall. "Dropping in for breakfast," she observed and went to let him in. Julie followed her into the great open hall. Stewart Crosby stood in the

By CAROLYN DARLING and ARMITAGE WHITMAN

open door smiling easily, and Julie's heart lifted when she looked at the good-looking man on the steps. He gave her a feeling of trust and faith, the kind of ease a child has when it comes near a favorite relative. Just looking at Stewart made her feel happy and safe. She had a lot she wanted to tell him although he had only left her a few hours ago.

There had been an alert the night before and Julie had gone on air-warden duty. Stewart was patrolling, and after the all-clear, he had walked her home.

He had come in for "just one cigarette" and they had found themselves still playing gin rummy at twelve-thirty. Julie had felt in a silly mood so they had had a completely pointless conversation punctuated by bits of laughter. He always adapted himself to her mood.

"I hope I'm not too early?" Stewart asked. The deference in his manner made his charm convincing.

"Of course not too early," Julie repeated, knowing that as far as she was concerned Stewart's welcome was always assured.

It was Stewart who had stood behind her after her father's death; Stewart who had comforted her through all those bleak hours; it was he who talked with the lawyers over the settling of the estate that seemed so prolonged and full of heart-breaking details.

ALTHOUGH she had known him always and taken him for granted, lately he had become someone she had suddenly discovered. He seemed almost her own age although she had always thought of him as a family friend, associated in her mind with Lily's friends, the hunt set. Now he was miraculously her friend and she had grown up in her own estimation because of it.

"They're urging me to take on the senior warden's post, Julie. What do you think?" He stood beside her and took her arm.

"Coffee? There's still some in the pot," Julie said and led him to the dining room. Julie wondered why the coffee cup didn't smash as Sarah plunked it on the table.

"Sarah doesn't approve of my coming here," Stewart smiled. "Tain't proper. Why don't you stay home with your wife?" His imitation of Sarah was irresistible.

"But Bea doesn't mind your coming here, does she?" Julie said.

"Bea doesn't care where I go," said Stewart. He said it casually and lightly, not bitterly. It was perhaps his greatest charm and greatest weakness that nothing seemed to ruffle his geniality.

There's the whole thing summed up in a nutshell, Julie thought. If Bea doesn't care, and Stewart doesn't care, and I don't care, why should I bother about the gossip? Let them talk and talk. I'm not going to have it ruin this friendship with Stewart. Why, I'm the only person who really understands him; we depend on each other: Here in her home he seemed to find relaxation from the dominance of his mother and the restless energy of his wife. The two Mrs. Crosbys between them had enough executive ability to run the state of Connecticut; they used it to run the Crosby Chemical Foundation. Stewart,

who had been labeled "Mama's boy" when he was in school, had with heart-breaking obviousness married a girl of the same caliber as his mother. Stewart for years had enjoyed the empty title of executive vice-president under his mother, seeking solace in sports and alcohol for his feeling of uselessness and inefficiency. Lately, since Julie Edgerton had begun to look to him for advice and comfort, he had been drinking less heavily. It was more exciting than whiskey to have this lovely child hanging on his decisions, trusting and admiring him.

"Take over the senior warden job, Stewart," Julie coaxed. "Things are in a muddle. You'll straighten them out." What she was saying was that there wasn't anything he couldn't do. She made him feel efficient, gave him faith in his man's prerogative of leadership.

"I've got a wonderful idea," she announced.

"What is it this time?" Stewart asked, watching the eagerness come into her face.

"Suppose we have a county fair? Couldn't we do it on very little? Everyone would help and with fortunetellers, side-shows and local talent we could make enough money to buy all the air-warden equipment and give the leftover to war relief. Don't you see? If you take on the wardenship you could organize it, Stewart."

"You're wishing that on me too," Stewart said, smiling indulgently.

"It'd be fun," she went on. "And now that Lily's coming back—I wonder what she'll be like?"

"Lily won't have changed," Stewart said with a smile of amused reminiscence. Julie wished she had a vivid personality like her sister. When they spoke of Lily people always remembered things about her, situations she got into and out of.

The house had been lonely in the three months since her father's death. At moments Lily missed him piercingly, as if she had just realized his loss; but on the whole she'd been happy. Why don't I miss him as much as I should? she thought. Have I escaped my grief over Father's death by turning to Stewart? Could it be that?

"Do you think I'm like Lily at all, Stewart?" she asked. "You know, anywhere?"

"Not anywhere," said Stewart.

I wonder what I am like, thought Julie. Certainly she didn't have Lily's amber hair, nor her style. That was it; Lily had style. Lily could come into a room and pale everyone else. It wasn't the things she wore; it was rather a brilliance of personality.

I'm just in the ranks, thought Julie, and she wasn't very much concerned about it. After all, didn't Stewart Crosby think enough of her to drop by at odd moments and ask her opinion about this and that?

The sudden sound of an automobile broke into the lazy calm of the dining room.

"It's Lily," cried Julie, running into the hall.

Sarah had opened the door and Julie saw her sister standing in the foyer, tall,

slender, the autumn sunlight glinting her hair.

"Lily!"

For a second Lily's eyes narrowed at the girl before her. Then she came toward her with a little rush and took her younger sister in her arms.

"Baby," said Lily, "how marvelous to see you. Let me look at you. Why, Julie, you're all grown up now."

Julie laughed. "What did you expect, Lily? But you're just the same as I remember! Isn't this fun?"

They faced each other, reflected in the silvery pool of mirror over the table, Lily Latimer who had great beauty, and Julie Edgerton with her luminous highstrung look of happiness.

Their only resemblance lay in the tilt of their fine heads and the set of their straight shoulders.

"We couldn't let you know anything definite about arriving," said Lily. "The censor said 'No.'"

Julie went to greet John Latimer, a tall figure in well-cut but unpressed tweeds.

"You've grown up, my dear," he said in his slow voice. A chauffeur brought in bags and then Julie noticed a tall young man getting out of the car and she saw that he moved with a slight limp.

He stood for a moment at the car door and a child leaped out and ran ahead of him.

"Captain Gault," Lily told Julie. "He's here with John to handle some of the hush-hush business on war supplies. He brought his little girl along to put her in school. I hope it isn't too much for you to have them here for a night or two, Julie. New York seemed pretty terrifying for Sally to take all at once."

"Oh, no, there's plenty of room. I'm glad . . . so glad, Lily."

Captain Gault came into the doorway. He had a kind of secret intensity in his face, and his gray eyes, conspicuous because of his deep tan, were diagnostic. He gave the impression of great power and strength.

"Tony," Lily turned to him, "this is Julie, my little sister."

Gault bowed sharply but his smile was sensitive, almost delicate.

"Hope it's all right us barging in like this, Lily insisted," said Anthony Gault. "Oh, there's plenty of room," said Julie.

The little girl stood near her father, nervous as a bird, strain in the expression on her pale face, the same dark hair as Gault's, black as a rook's wing, the same awareness in her carriage.

"Hello," said Julie and the child curtsied and took Lily's hand.

"How do you do?" said Sally Gault. "We just got off a bomber."

"Everything looks exactly the same," Lily proclaimed, sailing into the dining room. "It's marvelous to be back."

"Blow me down, Stewey Crosby!" Julie heard her sister's voice with the English accent which seemed strange but charming. John was giving the chauffeur instructions about the luggage.

Sally pulled at Julie's arm.

"I say, do you think I could have an orange?"

"Not going to make a nuisance of yourself?" Gault asked the child shrilly.

"No, I'm not," said Sally, her thin shoulders rising resentfully.

And Julie glancing at Gault thought, he's young but he looks at the end of things. There was curious vitality in his face that fought with disillusionment. Or was it just bad temper?

"How's your mother, Stewey?" Lily was asking when Julie led the Gaults to the dining room. "I've told Captain Gault reams about her. Part of John and Tony's work here is to speed up the sending of drugs."

She smiled happily at the three personable men in the dining room, gathering them to her as if she were in the center of a stage.

Sarah was coming through the swinging doors with a tray of coffee and toast. And Julie asked her to bring an orange for the little girl. Latimer turned to Julie.

"This is rather an invasion you know."

"It's swell, John. Such a chance to get to know you and to see you again. I'm dying to hear about your trip over. Was it very exciting? Did you come by Lisbon?"

"So odd not to think of my sister as nine years old," Lily said to Stewart.

ANTHONY GAULT was standing at the window and Julie couldn't imagine having anything to say to him. He seemed out of the group from choice—as if he were an invisible watcher.

"How's Bea?" Lily was asking Stewart. "Still the same dashing creature?"

Julie shot a glance at her sister, guessing that Lily was trying to find out if Stewart were still married to Bea.

Will Lily understand? she asked herself. Will I be able to go to her and talk things out?

"Always envied Bea," Lily was going on, "there never seemed to be anything she couldn't manage."

"She's still up to tricks," said Stewart. If Lily'll only wait, I'll explain it all. Julie was thinking. The whole pack of older women of the county will go to Lily with gossip of Stewart's coming here so often. It was ridiculous having a scandal built around her friendship with him; they weren't in love.

Chapter Two

JULIE drummed her fingers on the table and there was a little frown on her brow as she watched Stewart and Lily. Suddenly she turned to find Anthony Gault sitting next to her, watching her with a peculiar, questioning scrutiny.

"Passed a number of fields on the way up," he said. "Ought to be good hunting around here."

"The Chalfont Hunt's here," she told him. "I won't belong because I can't stand hunting. Why there's any sport in chasing a poor fox—"

"The trouble," Gault said, still watching her, "is that sometimes one identifies oneself with the fox."

Going up the stairs after lunch Julie heard the Gault child talking to Sarah. Sally was going on a great rate about air raids. "First you hear the sirens," she was saying, giving a shrieking imitation. Julie reached the first floor and looked down the long hall, with the autumn leaves standing about in great bowls casting shadows on the wall. John Latimer and Gault had gone for a walk but Lily was home. Passing her bedroom, Julie looked in and saw her sister surrounded by bags.

"Can I help?" Julie asked.

"No, but come in and talk to me. We haven't had a minute alone."

Julie sat on the arm of a chair, stretched her long legs and watched Lily's quick graceful motions as she unpacked.

Lily flung some clothes on the bed and lit a cigarette.

"What goes on?"

"Oh, pretty much the same crowd is in the saddle," Julie said. "An awful lot of the men are away in the Army."

"Stewey's mother still substituting for the Lord Almighty in lower Connecticut?"

So we're going to talk about Stewart, thought Julie, and involuntarily she straightened up. It would mean so much if Lily would understand. If Lily would let her talk it out so that she could find her values in her friendship with Stewart.

"Still the boss," said Julie. "The Foundation is her god. Mrs. Crosby's a wonderful woman, but sometimes I do wish she wouldn't lay down the law so much. I just wish she were a little softer."

Lily mused. "Mrs. Crosby and I didn't always get on but she's a smart old gal and I like her. You watch out, Julie, and be nice to her. She's a good friend and a bad enemy."

Does that mean, Julie wondered, that Lily would side with Mrs. Crosby against me? For Julie knew that Stewart's mother meant to put an end to their friendship. When her father had died Mrs. Crosby had encouraged Stewart to help Julie but lately, since Stewart had been with her so much, she had felt Mrs. Crosby's disapproval.

"What about Stewart and Bea?" Lily asked. "They're not divorced, are they?" She was putting an armful of lingerie in the bureau and she looked at her face carefully in the mirror as she listened for Julie's answer.

"No, but they don't see much of each other. Bea's always away at business conferences. They've closed their house and she and Stewart are living with his mother."

"So that's the setup. And where do you come into the picture, Julie?" asked Lily, stopping to sit on the little love seat at the end of the bed. What a lovely picture, Julie thought before she asked, "What do you mean?"

"The air-warden business didn't put me off," said Lily laughing lightly. "I know Stewart Crosby. He doesn't come over here to have breakfast with you because he's concerned with the fate of the country."

"I knew you'd think that," said Lily, feeling a stir of uneasiness under Julie's lightly mocking cross-examination.

"Any other beaux?" asked Lily.

"Stewart's not a beau," said Julie.

"More than that?"

"Oh, Lily," said Julie. "Stewart's not in love with me. It's just—"

"You forget how well I know Stewart," said Lily. "He's always been in love with someone. But I never expected you to be involved with the Crosby charm. Cradle snatching." She looked over at her sister with appraising eyes. You're young and vivid with life, she seemed to be thinking, but don't be so naive.

"I thought we could talk of Stewart understandingly," Julie said from the window.

"What do you want from him?" asked Lily.

"Nothing."

"Nonsense," said Lily crisply. "Has Stewart spoken of divorcing Bea?"

"No, of course not. He's never even . . . why neither of us—" Julie broke off. "Can't you understand, Lily, that this is friendship between Stewart and me? Why, I've never thought of his divorcing Bea. I've known Bea all my life."

"What's that got to do with it?" asked Lily. "You've told me that Stewart's unhappy, that Bea's never home. Why do you think he comes to see you, Julie?"

"He came over after Father died," Julie told her. "Those were pretty grim days, and there were all sorts of things I didn't understand and he was marvelous."

"Very romantic," said Lily. "And now you find you need each other. That there's a great sympathy between you. Well, where do you go from there?"

"Why go anywhere?"

"Don't be a fool, Julie. The whole countryside must be gossiping. Stewart has no right to put you in this position even if you're idiot enough to let him. You're just a baby."

"I don't care what people say."

"You will, darling," said Lily, stubbing out her cigarette and rising to reach for a nail file. "Why not put it up to Stewart?"

THAT was different from anything Julie had expected Lily to say, and it left her a little up in the air. Lily seemed so sure but so ruthless. Lily would think she was lying if she said now she wasn't in love with Stewart.

And so I would be in a way, Julie realized. For Lily's amiable probing had made her understand that she was looking toward Stewart for all the decisions of her life, made her understand, too, the unworldliness of her own life and attitudes compared to this very polished, almost frightening creature, her sister.

"Now you find you need each other," Lily had said. Did Stewart feel that? Had their friendship been weaving a tapestry this way and that, until they couldn't get along without each other?

"Marry Stewart," said Lily. "I'll tell you how to go about it once I've seen his mother. She'll be the tall fence you'll have to take. But in the end she'll give in. The Edgertons and the Crosbys have always been friends. Stewart married to you will stay within the circle."

"Mrs. Crosby telephoned," Julie said. "She wants us all to go over for dinner to-

night. Bea's away but she's having some of your old friends in."

"Ah," said Lily putting down the file and beginning with the buffer. "How are things going with you and Sarah here?"

"Oh, we manage."

"Marry Stewart," Lily said again. "Love and money. We'll have to ask John about a little allowance for you although money's scarce these days . . . well, anyway, for a touseau if you pull things off. It's nice Stewart is rich." Lily took a long look over the room. The same *toile de Jouy* curtains hung at the windows; the mulberry colored rug, a little faded, was still on the floor and the bed wore its canopy. Her reverie was broken by Sally Gault's piping voice floating up from the stairs.

"One day when I was in an air raid—" she was telling Sarah.

"Who's this Captain Gault?" Julie asked her sister.

"He was one of the Commandos," Lily said. "Got smashed up at Bruneval. Now he's working with John on supplies and going to do some lectures for your Ranger trainer commands. I believe."

"Where's the child's mother? She's such a nervous little thing. She hasn't stopped talking to Sarah about air raids all day. It's heartbreaking to see a child like that."

"Her mother was killed in an air raid."

"How dreadful," said Julie in sharp pity. "He looked finished, I thought."

"Tony? Tony finished?" Lily laughed shortly. "Nothing will finish Tony Gault. He'll be going on when we're all through." Her voice was full and lovely. "His wife wasn't worthy of a person like Tony . . . nice enough, of course—"

Julie turned away. She was glad Lily had dropped the subject of Stewart but she felt an even greater reluctance to have that incisive mind analyzing Tony Gault. She felt that he needed gentleness and no questions. She didn't want to know Lily's explanation of him.

Now that her relationship to Stewart had been put into words it seemed different. Lily had made her see it as it probably was. Something was going to happen, and she felt as if she were being rushed forward into a decision. The comfortable security she had felt with Stewart was shaken. And the words that Anthony Gault had spoken to her at breakfast flew into her mind. "Trouble is, you know, sometimes one identifies one's self with the fox."

Chapter Three

JULIE began playing the piano softly while she waited for the others to come down. They were going to Mrs. Crosby's for dinner and she was thinking, I'll be right on the battlefield tonight.

Mrs. Crosby had been rather friendly with her on the telephone, but glad, evidently, that Lily had returned.

Julie was still a little bewildered by her talk with Lily. Why was Lily so firm about her marrying Stewart? That seemed to be her forward drive for Julie's happiness. But Julie shook her head. It was em-

barrassing; she didn't like to have anyone—even her sister, rushing into her life. She had never imagined herself really married to Stewart. How could Lily think Stewart was aiming toward that? She was glad of these few minutes' respite to think things out. And then suddenly the answer to the problem came to her. It was the answer to all her troubles these days.

She would talk it over with Stewart. All she had to say to him was that Lily thought their friendship conspicuous. He always understood everything. It was inevitable now that they would have to discuss it. Would that shatter their friendship? That was what she feared. You can't stand still, Lily had said. But it was better to know where you were going, Julie felt, before moving.

You have to have something inside yourself that is so strong nothing can blast it. And as if to answer her thought she looked up to see Anthony Gault in the doorway, watching her.

"Go on playing," He came in and crossed the room to the fireplace. In the formality of severe black and white he looked more than ever like a figure from the romantic past as he stood tapping a cigarette on his case with his fine, long, tanned fingers. Julie started to play Just One of Those Things, imagining him with a blackened face, knife in hand, bound for killing in a Commando raid, his curious gray eyes searching the darkness.

"Tell me something about the raids?" she asked.

"More dramatic to read about them." He came over to lean on the piano, walking with his peculiar halting grace.

"Oh, don't be reticent," said Julie. "I'm dying to meet an Englishman who never heard of reserve."

"If I told you that sometimes during a raid my most passionate thought concerned a cup of tea, would you believe it?" His voice is nice, Julie thought. And he has a strange charm, now that he's relaxed. She could imagine his having an almost hypnotic effect on her and felt her breathing quicken.

"Well, if you won't talk," said Julie, "Sally's willing enough to tell of her blitz experiences."

"Her what?" Gault demanded.

"The air raids she's been through."

"She's never been in one in her life," he said sharply, swift annoyance in his face. "We managed to keep her out of them by sending her to Scotland," he went on more calmly. "Whatever has she been telling you?"

"Oh, nothing," said Julie, feeling she was dealing with something she didn't understand. Her puzzlement at Gault's reaction to his child, awakened this morning when he had been so brusque with Sally, returned. It was unbelievable that anyone as sensitive as he seemed to be to the moods around him could so misunderstand his own child. "She's probably heard a lot. I suppose she's making it up. She stopped playing make-believe," she said.

"Make-believe indeed!" said Gault. "Escaping to make-believe is nothing but a lack of courage. You don't believe me?" He looked at Julie with the lamplight over her. "Reality's the most romantic thing we

possess. Haven't you found that out yet?"

"Oh, I don't know." She began playing again but she was thinking of the tension between child and father. Perhaps Sally's nervousness and elusiveness made him think of his wife and her death. Maybe he was bitter that she had gone and he had been spared. Perhaps every time he looked at Sally he was reminded.

"A child's fantasy seems fairly harmless to me, Captain Gault. Sally will settle down when she gets used to us."

"You're kind. I hope you're right. I've seen too much ruin in lives from nursing along instability to want Sally to be coddled. Believe me, I'm only strict with her because doctors told me her lying was becoming dangerous to her development."

John Latimer's pleasant voice broke into the drawing room. "Ah, cocktails." Julie almost regretted his coming, but it was a relief. When she had been talking with Gault there had been a feeling of such intimacy that she had the sensation of answering without volition . . . almost as if some need in his nature drew the answers from her. It was too disturbing a sensation to want to sustain it. But she was curious. Sally was a key to his character and Julie was flattered because he had discussed the child with her.

THEY were at coffee in the drawing room after dinner. Mrs. Crosby at the side of her fireplace. Julie was deep in gin rummy with John Latimer and the Talbot twins, but Stewart Crosby was not at the table. He was on his good behavior tonight, at his best as genial host, Julie noticed, doubtless due to his mother's having given him explicit instructions.

The dinner had gone well. Mrs. Crosby was in top form, with just enough antagonism and authority to be provocative. Her brilliant instinct for being a hostess kept her wit sharp and drew out her guests' best points. She had asked Gault in the deep voice that controlled so many committee meetings and clubs: "Well, what do you British want now?"

He smiled at her lazily, "A little understanding," he said.

This had pleased the old lady for some reason and their conversation at dinner had been easy and frank, almost like old friends! Lily had managed to have a talk with Mrs. Crosby alone before they went into dinner and she had given her a brief, vivid sketch of Tony Gault's career. The old lady had listened quietly.

"And now you're his champion," she said. Lily's face had tightened a little under Mrs. Crosby's slightly satirical smile.

"When I was in England," Lily said to Tony later, "I was homesick to be here. Now I'm homesick for London."

"Readjustment. Takes a long time before you stop feeling out of it."

"I can't imagine you ever feeling out of it, Tony."

"I've felt out of it most of my life."

There was a difficult silence between them and then Lily spoke.

"It's ages since we've really talked, Tony."

"Let's not bother. Sorry to sound smug. Count me out, Lily. I'm really not much

good even to myself right now—haven't been for a bit."

Would she never reach him, Lily wondered? Would she ever pierce either his brutal frankness or formality, both of which he used as shields of armor? She had been in his arms once and the memory of that moment went over her in a wave.

There had been an air right that night, with its sharp cries, the awful whistlings that fled into tearing shrieks. Even after the all-clear the clanging of London went on in desperate attempts to succor the wounded, to quench fires.

Lily had been alone, for John was at a late meeting. She had been in the blacked-out library when Gault came in. Seeing him by the light of a single lamp, she knew that he had come from a scene of disaster. There was a look on his face as if he had heard destruction in his soul.

He was halfway across the room before he seemed to see her and he came toward her like a man roaming the earth. Seeking what?

Lily had gone to him and drawn him to her. She remembered every minute detail of the moment. But sharpest in her mind was the memory of his kiss, an invader's kiss, half triumphant, half resentful. It was her own terrible rush of tenderness that had surprised her and suddenly controlled him.

For one moment she had tasted a strange deep triumph.

Sitting there near Tony Gault in Mrs. Crosby's drawing room, she had a vague idea of what it was to be a beggar.

Mrs. Crosby was looking at them, and Lily managed a smile.

"Captain Gault," the voice of authority was unmistakable, "you ask me all sorts of questions about the Foundation and then you desert me?"

"I'm afraid of you," said Gault, rising, bowing to Lily and going toward his hostess.

Lily had paused to speak to one of the other guests. "We're stopping with Julie for awhile. John and Tony will have to go on to Washington and I expect I'll shop and see some shows in New York. We have no idea how long we'll be here, but it's thrilling to be back in America again. Do you realize I haven't seen Julie since she was nine? Of course we've had pictures and letters, but it was a shock to have her all grown up," she said in answer to Claire's questions, but she couldn't keep her eyes off Tony. He was sitting next to Mrs. Crosby now, bending toward her with that deference that made him so attractive to women.

And again her mounting obsession for Gault assailed Lily. Confound him for disturbing me like this, she thought. But in fairness to him she knew she had only herself to blame, for indulging herself once when she had caught him off guard. She knew he found her a stimulating person to be with and her recklessness amused him, but he had never encouraged her in any way. It was a thought that humiliated her further.

She exerted herself to concentrate on Claire and her doings and managed to charm her completely before she moved

on to Mrs. Crosby and Gault, dropping into a chair and reaching for a cigarette.

"This place is full of memories," Lily said.

Tony was looking at Lily draped against the brocade chair, a smile on her strangely beautiful face. Mrs. Crosby also observed her with the keen glance of a rival inspecting an adversary she respected but didn't altogether trust.

"I've got a tenant for my little stone house," she told Lily. "Captain Gault's taking it sight unseen."

Lily became less recumbent and her topaz eyes widened. The little stone house on the brook, the house that lay between the Edgerton and Crosby estates. Not so bad, thought Lily.

SUDDENLY Mrs. Crosby reared like an old war horse going into battle. She was looking at her son Stewart and Julie Edgerton.

Julie, still at the card table, was laughing and Stewart was gazing down at her with such a look of intensity as to be completely off guard.

"Too exciting!" Julie was telling the Talbot twins. "Stewart called me at five the other morning. 'Man your post,' he said, and I dashed into my things in less than two minutes flat. I was—"

"Stewart," called Mrs. Crosby. For a moment Stewart Crosby hesitated, impatience flaring on his smooth well-fed, highly bred face, and then he went toward his mother.

"Stewart's interested in research, Captain Gault," Mrs. Crosby said as he came up. "You must talk to him about this problem of yours."

"Step by my office one day," said Stewart, still annoyed.

"Thanks," said Gault with equal courtesy.

Julie was coming down the room with the Talbot twins making a handsome frame for her finely boned figure in the sweeping dress. "If we can get this country fair started," she was saying. "I spoke to Stewart about it..."

But what Mrs. Crosby said stopped her. "Lily, your father used to say Julie resembled your mother but I don't think she's really like her, do you?" Julie knew exactly what Mrs. Crosby meant. You are flirting with my son, who is married, and your behavior is conspicuous and unworthy of your family. That's what she was really saying. What was worse everyone else, with the exception of Tony and John, knew what Mrs. Crosby meant as well as Julie; knew that she had seized this slim opportunity to fire the opening gun in the battle.

If Julie had ever wondered what it was like to stand trial she knew now, but her head went back and she answered before Lily could, "Father'd still think so," she managed. Then, feeling one of her quick blushes mounting, she turned away and found herself face to face with Gault.

It was as if he were looking at her from some strange distance and the sound of his voice saying, "Don't identify yourself with the fox," seemed to touch her.

"I won't," she said to him suddenly. "Not ever again." And whether he knew all the

implications or not he smiled at her with a curious understanding kindness.

Lily's glance, sweeping from face to face, stopped suddenly on Tony Gault's. She saw him watching her sister with a sort of elation rising in his eyes.

It was gone almost before she caught it. But she had seen all there was in it, as if a searchlight had illuminated him. She knew then that he was attracted to Julie, and a rush of jealousy caught her in a sudden nauseating wave.

The instant I saw my sister in the doorway this morning, I knew she was dangerous, Lily said within herself. I knew that it was not only her youth that I had to contend with but some quality of warmth that is entirely disarming. She has a quality beyond glamor.

And she wanted to go up to Julie and slap her face; she wanted to tear her to pieces. But instead Lily took a long pull on her cigarette. It couldn't be, she told herself. It wasn't going to be if she could help it.

Stewart had dropped away from the circle around his mother, and Lily went up to him.

"Julie's very beautiful, isn't she, Stewey?" said Lily Latimer.

Chapter Four

JULIE was having lunch with Stewart Crosby at the Inn. As she frowned over the menu her thoughts went back to her sister, about the talk they had together before Lily and John had gone off to Washington with Tony Gault.

"You must get away from here," Lily had advised her. "Why not come along with me? After Washington, we'll go to New York. We'll see some shows and shop while the men work."

"But I can't leave Sally. She's so much calmer."

Lily had looked really provoked when she had answered. "Really, Julie, I think you have been a little highhanded taking the child over. It would have been much better putting her in boarding school. After all she's Tony's child, nothing to you."

"Nothing but a lonely little girl who was frightened."

"Julie, darling, don't be sentimental and absurd. You have your own life to lead. Come along with us. Then Stewart will find how much he misses you and the next thing you know he'll be talking it over with Bea. That's what you'd do if you were smart."

"Well, I'm not and I don't want to be," Julie said.

"Stewey's in love with you," Lily went on. "He wants you more than anyone in his life. Marry him. Give him a child. There's your future."

Julie hadn't said much. She didn't want to go to New York. She didn't want Stewart rushed into a romance with her, into marrying her. But she hadn't explained that to Lily. She felt something so strange in Lily's pushing her toward such a marriage. Why was she being so intense about the whole thing, as if it had to be settled

immediately? Her sister had been restless and irritable, and Julie was almost glad when she left for Washington. Lily needed the great world. Here things were too slow, too provincial for her powers.

Now a glance across the table told her that Stewart was watching her. The indulgent warmth she usually saw was in his eyes, but it was more exciting than just warmth. She always felt goaded to flirt with him when he gave her his whole attention this way, to exercise her power. I'm like Lily, she thought; and with the thought she blurted out what she had meant to reveal subtly.

"Lily thinks our friendship's conspicuous," said Julie.

"I know there'd be trouble when she came." He wasn't upset. He smiled blandly as if pleased at guessing right, and Julie felt a little silly.

"Well, I think we should be realistic about it." And not knowing exactly what she meant she grabbed at the first authority she could quote, "Captain Gault was talking to me about reality and fantasy. He said—"

"Gault . . . he should know," Stewart picked her up. "He's rather realistic about Lily. Haven't you noticed it? And if Lily continues her interest in him she'll find out what it is to be conspicuous. She's a fine one to criticize you I must say. She better not pull another fast one. People's memories are short but they haven't all forgotten Lily's escapades."

Julie was frozen with sudden rage. It swept over her uncontrollably. "What do you mean by speaking like that about Lily? What are you talking about?"

Stewart had the grace to look embarrassed. "I'm sorry, baby. She's your sister and I had no right to say those things about her. Don't be sore and I'll tell you exactly what Lily said to you." He went into one of his brilliantly accurate imitations that made her laugh, angry as she was at the moment. "Having a love affair with Stewey? Oh, don't be naive. I know Stewey well enough to know he isn't just hanging around to be helpful. Wasn't it something like that?"

"I told you what she said—that our friendship was conspicuous," Julie answered, still a little cross at Stewart. She felt like an awkward adolescent. She had a feeling Lily would not have liked the way she was handling this conversation. Well, it was Lily's idea and Lily's fault for making an issue of it.

"Lily never stopped there," Stewart said, ordering another cocktail. "I knew what she'd think from the first moment she came into the dining room. Well, what does it matter?"

"It seems to matter to your mother."

He reached a hand across the table. "You know what my life at home is. You know all about it. Mother has always been a problem for me, much as I love her. You know how the estate is—"

"What's that got to do with it?"

"You're not a bit like Lily," Stewart said.

"I wish I were."

He smiled out of the corner of his mouth and she was sharply aware of his facial charm.

"Sometimes, Julie, I wish you were, too." He leaned closer. "I've wanted to tell you so many things. To ask you to have patience. If you'd only see. . ."

"What?"

He fell into a silence and Julie felt lost and more embarrassed than ever. Something in Stewart's manner made her feel she was forcing issues. It was the first time they had ever discussed their friendship. The thought of it may have been between them but it was a shared secret, accepted and not pried into; something they alone knew about.

"We've never talked about our friendship, have we?" Julie said. "It never struck me as being conspicuous."

"That word! Julie, you know I've known Lily long enough to have the privileges of a brother and one of the privileges is to say that fascinating as she undoubtedly is and dazzling to you, Lily is a so and so in lots of ways. I wouldn't trust Lily."

Julie stood up. "I'm going," she said.

Stewart tossed some money on the table and followed her out.

"We've never had a quarrel," he said, taking her arm. "Tell me what you're really thinking. What you want me to do. Stop quoting Lily at me." She felt the justice of his remark, also the irony of it since she never would have started this futile conversation if it hadn't been for Lily.

THEY stood in the sharp autumn sunlight outside the Inn and Julie was delighted to see Sally in a group of children running across the village green from school to the bicycle racks. She yoo-hooed at the child who came speeding toward her.

"Can I stay with you this afternoon, Julie?" Sally asked, jumping off her wheel.

"With us," Stewart corrected quickly. "There's nothing important for me at the plant this afternoon. I guess I'll play hockey. Besides I've got a present for you, Sally." Julie steadied the bicycle which wobbled treacherously in the little girl's clutches.

"What is it?" begged Sally.

"You'll see," Stewart smiled down on her eager little face. "Come on, Julie, let's show Sally the stables."

Julie shook her head. She wanted to be alone to think.

"Be fair, Julie. Give me a chance to explain," Stewart said in a low voice. "Don't go high and mighty on me."

He always knows how to get round me, she thought and then felt pleased. It was nice to be so at ease again with him. For the first time since Lily had disturbed her feelings about Stewart she was able to slip back into the quiet, comfortable old relationship with him. She wasn't conscious of him any longer as a disturbing and attractive male; he was just her trusted friend who decided things for her.

"What's the present? What's the present?" Sally was chirping, hopping first on one foot, then on the other.

"All right, Stewart. Let's go," Julie smiled up at him and slid her arm through his, feeling the sleek softness of his polo coat under her fingers. They crossed to

Stewart's car, and he lifted Sally's bicycle into the rumble seat.

The Crosby stables were low and wide-spreading and luxurious. They were exquisitely neat and had a great sweep of blue gravel before the main doors. Stewart slid the door of the carriage house back and it rolled on oiled wheels, displaying the great open room with its ranks of equipment. Everything was in perfect order. Carriages and sleighs of another day stood neatly in rows, the straw-woven pony cart, and two spidery sulkies leaning on their shafts. The door into the harness room showed the gleaming silver of mountings, loops of oiled and soaped harness hung from great wooden pegs, beside them the saddles; the room sent forth the pungent smell of fine leather.

"Where's my present?" Sally asked, skipping about among the carriages and peering into a brougham, fingering its polished step.

"I thought it was in here but it's probably outside." He opened a door into the back courtyard which led into the paddock with its brilliant green grass and whitewashed fence. "There you are, Sal. Take your pick." Sally gave a squeal of pure ecstasy and rushed toward a pair of honey-colored spaniel puppies who were rolling about near the door, chewing each other's ears.

Stewart closed the bottom half of the Dutch door and leaned over it, laughing at Sally before he turned away.

Then he took Lily's hand and led her back into the carriage house.

"The trouble is we never see each other alone any more," he explained. "We can't go on this way, Julie. It's bad for us." She felt his arm on her shoulders. "You know that, don't you?" He shook her a little, drawing her closer. "I love you." He turned her to him and kissed her. She was startled and gave him a little push.

"Julie." He bent forward and touched his lips to her cheek. "No one can put aside what's between us, can they?"

Julie stirred uneasily. What was between them? Stewart had never made love to her. She suddenly didn't know how she felt. The ecstasy she had dreamed of when she had let her thoughts stray romantically toward Stewart was lacking. This kiss left her perfectly in control of her senses. She felt vaguely silly at being kissed there in the empty seclusion of the carriage house.

"I love you, Julie. You know that, don't you? Don't you?"

She was silent, trying to move away without seeming to be detaching herself from him.

"I'm always thinking of the time when I come home and you'll be there waiting," he said softly, "but that has to be in the future."

"For now you just want to leave things as they are. Just keep coming to see me? Is that what you're proposing, Stewart?"

"If I've hurt you in any way, I'm sorry," he said in a different voice. Julie shrugged and turned away. She opened the door and called Sally who came over with a puppy in her arms.

"I've chosen this one," the child said.

The afternoon was full of the scent of

burning leaves and the tart smell of apples. Julie breathed in deeply and felt suddenly freed and released. She said good-by as nicely and as fast as she could. "I'll call you, honey. Don't go away mad, Julie," he begged. As she went off she thought, Stewart has great charm when he's humble.

They took the brook path home. Julie was intoxicated with the lovely light filtering through the autumn leaves, by the child and dog playing now behind her, now in front. She felt like a new strange person. Stewart's kiss had not roused her, but away from his physical presence she began to relive the scene and her sense of romance gilded it. She was glamorous, she was desirable, she was like Lily: That was it. A faint sense of uneasiness came to her again at the thought of Lily. The leaves crunched under the bicycle as she wheeled it along. Sally suddenly called to her.

"Look, Julie . . . look, look. Daddy's home." And she saw a light in the little stone house. Then she saw Gault, dark and tall in the doorway.

"I was just making tea," he said over Sally's head to Julie. "Stay and have some with me."

THE house looked lonely and Gault seemed to have added nothing to the living room but his periodicals and books.

Julie sank into a large leather chair near the fireplace while Gault went for a tea tray laden with muffins, jam, and tea in one of Mrs. Crosby's fat silver tea pots.

"Are Lily and John back, too?" Julie asked, pulling a table into place for the tray. He put it down in front of her.

"I left them in Washington," he said. "Lily asked me to tell you that they expect to be back by Tuesday at the latest. She'll wire you if there's a change."

"I wish I were like Lily," she said suddenly into the comfortable silence, automatically reaching a hand to steady Sally's cup. "I wish I understood people better and could manage situations. Lily's gallant." She was talking to herself as much as to Gault.

He had lit the fire and was kicking a log into place, setting a shower of sparks free.

"I think you took the British invasion very gallantly," he smiled at her.

"Oh, but that was fun." She finished her tea. She curled up in the arm chair and lit a cigarette. It was peaceful here and she wanted to settle down for a long talk. It was as if she'd known Gault forever. "You know," she went on, staring at the fire, "you spoke of fantasy once as a lack of courage, Captain Gault, and now I think I know what you mean. It's just trying to dance in a blind alley, isn't it?"

"Do you think there is anyone who hasn't tried that?"

She sat there musing, her scarlet coat sweeter brilliant against the yellow leather of the chair. This tea, she felt, seemed like a halt in a half-way house, a kind of resting place in a journey. Sally had taken the puppy out in the garden and her voice and the sound of the brook came into the room. Julie broke the silence again.

"I don't think Lily deals in fantasy at all," she said. "I think she has the courage to face things as she sees them."

"Don't try to be someone else," he said. "If I were going to be sent off on a dangerous mission, I should choose you to come to and talk it over."

He startled her. "Why do you say that?" Was he trying to build her up, make her feel assured instead of a hopeless muddler? Was she giving herself away as much as that?

"I say it because I mean it," he said gently.

She wondered if she had embarrassed Gault by talking so much about Lily. It had been an unconscious defiance to show herself that she didn't believe Stewart's gossip.

Chapter Five

WEDNESDAY was Red Cross day and Julie, leaving Lily at the breakfast table, went for her coat. Lily had arrived on

Sunday without John, full of gay tales, refreshed, excited and herself again. John was to follow her after winding up his business.

Julie was glad to get out of the house. She wasn't mercurial like Lily. She couldn't forget so easily what had happened last evening. It was when they were having cocktails before dinner. Sally had appeared in her dressing gown, after her supper in the kitchen, to be kissed good night.

She was telling Lily about the puppy and she mentioned tea at the stone house with her father. When Sarah came in to collect the child, Lily had raised her eyebrows at Julie.

"What were you doing at the stone house?" she demanded.

"Just what Sally said. Having tea with Captain Gault," Julie answered. Then, amazed at her sister's expression, "What's wrong, Lily?"

Lily narrowed her eyes. "How many times did you see Tony when I was away?"

"Two or three times. I don't know. Why?"

"Because you can just stop seeing him," said Lily. "Tony Gault belongs to me."

"Belongs to you?"

Lily was breathing fast and she seemed to have no thought for what she was saying. She crossed the room and slammed the door shut and turned on Julie.

"Why do you think he's in this country? Because I got him the appointment. Why do you think I came home before John from Washington? Tony and I haven't had a chance to be alone since we arrived. So don't be naive and don't think you can come poaching on my reserves. You stay in your own back yard."

This was what Stewart had implied at lunch when Julie had defended Lily so hotly. What a fool she'd been. But some strong instinct told her that she'd rather be naive and have the wool pulled over her eyes than believe Tony would come over here with Latimer if he loved Lily; than believe that Lily could be this cheap a person. Her mind violently rejected

what Lily was saying and kept groping for some other explanation.

"But Lily—" Julie almost drew back from the flare of hatred staring out at her from her sister's eyes. A terrible disposition was there. Then in a flash it was gone and by some effort of will Lily's face slid into a smile.

"You don't know much about life, do you, sweet?"

"What about John?"

Lily laughed. She seemed to have suddenly recovered her good temper and the flash of hysterical rage had passed as quickly as it had started. "I'm sorry I scared you, Julie. Don't look at me like that. John is a dear. What I was really trying to tell you was to stick to your own man. Stewart is the right one for you. A lot of young girls have made fools of themselves over Tony." Lily paused . . . poured herself another cocktail, went over and sat beside Julie on the sofa. She was again the lovely glowing creature with the charm that swept irresistibly over Julie. "He can be sympathetic, deferential, but that's just a line. You'd never get anywhere with him."

"I've never tried to," Julie said indignantly.

"Of course you haven't. Now tell me how things are going with Stewey."

Julie had been saved from that by Sarah announcing dinner. Lily had been so gay and funny at dinner that the scene before seemed a dream. But in the back of Julie's mind was an acute distaste at the idea of Lily's fighting with her because of a man, and particularly unpleasant was the thought of her and her sister's being rivals.

The Red Cross rooms this morning received her with the restful deadening of a well-known routine. She fastened a blue veil over her head and settled down at her desk. There was a steady hum of voices, the click of typewriters; the room seemed to divorce all personal cares from Julie. There were numberless telegrams on her desk marked Rush-Reply and she settled down to her work of tracing requests from families for special furloughs for soldiers because of home emergencies. The first wire read:

MOTHER SERIOUSLY ILL. INVESTIGATE IF PRIVATE ROBERT'S PRESENCE NECESSARY. NAME MRS. GEORGE ROBERTS, TELEPHONE WILTON 802 RING 3.

She picked up the phone and asked for the operator. Slowly the pile of telegram blanks diminished and the day's program went on.

It was getting latish. The green shaded lamps were lit, the day almost over, and Julie, typing her last pink slip of case history, saw through the window that a bad storm was coming up. The rain had begun in fat slow drops and the tops of the trees were swaying in a high wind. But the sky made her really uneasy. Above the dirty gray of dusk there was a livid greenish light.

"Lily's back, isn't she?" Claire Price said, coming over to the desk. "Harry called me from Washington." Harry was Claire's husband. "Said he'd be in tonight

and that Mr. Latimer was flying with him. He's bringing an official British war film for the fair. I hope they land before this storm breaks. It looks bad. How're the side shows coming, Julie?"

"Fine, Claire. Fine. I'm sorry not to have time to talk but I want to get home." She had a sudden flash of uneasiness and dialled the house after Claire left. Sarah's stark voice came on the wire.

"Is Miss Lily there, Sarah?" asked Julie. "No, and she said she wouldn't be home for dinner, either," said Sarah.

"Oh. Have you heard from Mr. Latimer?"

"No, but there's a telegram. Arrived just after Miss Lily went. Didn't say where she was going, but she was walking and she was going toward the stone house."

Julie dialled the stone house but there was no answer.

Some instinct drove her on. She didn't know why she did what she did or whom she was protecting. . . . Lily, Gault, Latimer, or herself. All she knew was that she had to do something.

TONY GAULT stretched his legs and looked into the unlit fireplace of the stone house. War, he was thinking, was easier and less complicated than the situation he found himself in now. And his thoughts went back to England in a wave of longing for his own land but in an even more acute longing for army life away from the emotional drag of female society and the business of coping with being a good father to a little girl. He brushed his hand wearily over his face. In all fairness he had to admit that he wasn't coping with Sally. Julie was. His thought shied away from her. He wasn't going to let himself indulge in fancies; Julie was little more than a child herself, and he wasn't ready to give his heart to another woman. That's where his safety lay with Lily. But she was ruining all this by forcing issues that didn't exist except in her mind. He also felt his friendship with Latimer strained. John, Tony knew, was aware of Lily's interest in himself. And though no word was spoken between the two men he knew John was upset at Lily's behavior.

Beyond the petty irritations of his relationship with the Latimers was his deep distress at news he'd received of a convoy sinking. The subs had got three ships. All that work gone, but worse—the lives lost, the precious materials. Gault felt again the despair that sometimes threatened to overwhelm him. No place to turn for respite. His irritation at his personal life was so intense that it sickened him. To be concerned over himself in the face of Allied disaster seemed such a waste of energy. But he couldn't keep his mind off it.

He had known tranquil moments in this house. Its seclusion pleased him, held for him a kind of joy. The picture of Julie Edgerton here having tea in this room suddenly rose before him. She fitted the place; she was part of the atmosphere. He might as well admit it. She was someone he had imagined and never expected to find. A man could have peace with her. But she was someone, he knew, that he

had no right whatsoever to dream about.

There were steps coming up the gravelled path, a woman's footsteps. She was walking at a swift pace. Lily, he wondered? She had written him a note from Washington which he had destroyed. When he had come in this afternoon the telephone had just stopped ringing. The position he was in, Gault felt, was absurd and undignified but he didn't know how to get out of it.

Tony Gault went to the door and opened it.

"Lily!" he said, with just the wrong sort of surprise.

"Working, I suppose?" Lily stood there laughing at him with her eternal and exciting challenge. She was looking enchanting in a dull blue doekin jacket and skirt and a shocking pink shirt.

"Yes," he answered shortly.

"I've good news," she announced in her silvery voice, walking past him into the living room, "and you may as well ask me in. The Hamilton got over."

"Thank God. When did you find out?" Despite himself Gault's mood changed. This was fine news.

"I talked with John last night on the phone." Her eyes flickered round the room. "This room is rather like you, Tony, so plain yet so striking." She laughed.

"Did John say when he'd be back? You shouldn't have come here, Lily, you know," Tony stated.

"Let's have a drink together and I'll go home." She held out her hands to the fire, standing there smiling; the disturbing perfume she wore was alive in the room.

"You always remember that I like water in Scotch," she said as Gault brought her a drink.

"Most unwise to come here alone," he said ungraciously. He felt his irritation rising because he felt like a fool, and he felt trapped.

"Tony. Really!" she murmured softly. "Tell me what's making you so cross."

He looked at her, straight in the eye. Was it possible she was so self-deluded that she didn't know how he was trying to escape her? Was there no limit to an attractive woman's estimate of her own power?

"You're asking for trouble, Lily, and I want you to get something straight. Stop playing with fire."

"Darling," she said very low, holding her hand out to him, just touching his wrist.

And then suddenly they both drew apart. There were running footsteps on the gravel and farther away the sound of a car slowing on the highway. Lily moved across the room with her lazy grace and stood again before the fire.

Tony opened the door and Julie stood on the threshold, the night wild and blowy behind her.

"It's a night, isn't it?" Julie said, breathless, and she came in. She pulled off her trench coat and shook back her hair, which was sparkling with raindrops. "I got halfway home and saw your light, Captain Gault, and thought you might give me a drink."

"Come over to the fire and dry off,"

said Gault, his eyes unusually concerned. "Darling, don't look now, but are you following me?" Lily asked; her voice was just a shade off the gaiety it should have had.

If I can manage the right tone when I speak I can get over this awful second, thought Julie. "Oh, I didn't know you were here," she said. "I've been working all day at the Red Cross and then this storm came up and no one had a car, not even Claire Price."

"So I hitched here on a van," she went on, "hoping to meet John on the way. . . ."

"Meet John?" Lily exclaimed.

"Oh, didn't you know? Claire said he flew back this afternoon with Harry. He ought to have picked up his car at the airport. If the storm didn't ground them before, of course." John's car was on the high road, above the brook path. Julie knew, because when she reached here she'd seen it slowing up. He too was coming to the little stone house tonight, but he wouldn't find his wife alone with Gault.

"WHISKEY and rain. This is a marvelous end to a lousy day," said Julie, wondering how long she'd have to keep on talking.

Lily had taken a big flat gold compact from her pocket and was painting her mouth when John Latimer walked in. He hadn't waited for an answer to his knock and it was obvious from the expression on his face that he had come here looking for trouble.

He said nothing for a moment but his eyes, passing over his wife and Tony, stopped on Julie who was sitting deep in one of the big leather chairs. She looked very much at home with her feet on the fender, and she smiled over at him.

"Hello, John," she said. "Come by parachute?"

"Darling, I wasn't expecting you," Lily said, moving to her husband and slipping her arm through his. "We came down to tell Tony about the Hamilton."

"Scotch?" Gault asked him.

"Thanks, no," he said. "I've got some new stuff for you, Tony. We'll have to go over it tonight, I'm afraid."

"Righto," Tony said. "I'll come over after dinner."

The rain chattered against the window. There was still strain in the room, stronger than their efforts to destroy it. "I'll bet you're tired, John. You'll want a hot bath before dinner," Lily said.

"Rather. Coming, Julie?"

"I'll be along a little later." She waved at him.

"Devil of a night, isn't it?" Lily said going out of the door. "See you later, Tony. Julie, don't be late for dinner. Sarah's in a tizzy today and Sally won't go to bed till you've read to her."

Julie stayed in the chair until she heard the sharp slam of the car door and then she went over and got her raincoat.

"I suppose you know what you did?" Gault said.

"Charming situation, isn't it?"

"Don't go, Julie. There's a lot you don't understand," Gault told her. "I know

what you think. That your sister and I—"

"I didn't come here to discuss my sister."

"There's too much lost by politeness," said Gault. "There's been enough misunderstanding in this situation." He paused and walked a few steps away from her. Then he turned and came back to stand directly before her. "We're up against one of those confounded things that can't be discussed," he said. "I want you to know this, Julie. Your sister and I are not in love."

He was sitting into sharp anger and there was a biting incisiveness in his speech. He was too arrogant to explain and too earnest to let a false chivalry confuse this girl whom he trusted.

It was a devil of a night, Lily had said as she left. It certainly was, Gault thought. "Are you afraid to sit down and finish your drink with me?" he asked.

"Afraid? No, I think I'm rather sorry for you."

"That's one of the kindest things you've ever said to me," Gault thanked her.

She hadn't meant it to be kind; she'd meant to be sarcastic, but she realized her voice had softened when they were alone. She felt relaxed again.

"Curious thing," said Gault, slowly, "tonight's the anniversary of one of the bitterest moments of my life."

Julie looked over at him. A kind of anguish had come over his dark face.

"Just a year ago I found my wife killed in an air raid," Tony went on almost as if he were talking to himself.

"Oh," gasped Julie. He sat there looking across the room, and for a moment he wasn't there at all.

He was leaving Victoria Station in London, a strange London, blacked out and more beautiful than ever, a London full of noble shadows and great thoughts, as if, indeed, at last the town had fulfilled her destiny and was aware of it.

His leave had been unexpected and he hadn't seen Dorothy for several months. He was hoping, as he went to their flat, full of the loneliness of a fighting man, that he would understand his wife more fully. Now perhaps all the trivial things that had broken into their marriage, his jealousy, her restlessness, all would be overcome. They would begin the life he had planned when he married Dorothy. He had thought when they were first married that he had understood her so well. He had known her life and seen her mature from an inhibited schoolgirl into loveliness, a beauty almost, with her exotic soft white complexion and her ash-gold hair.

What, really, had she wanted? When Sally was born he thought that would pull their marriage into line. But Dorothy, if anything, became more restless. He couldn't make her out. And then slowly it came to him. She was moody in her marriage because he supplied none of the things she expected of him. She had a picture of him in her mind. Then, married to him, she found someone else and refused to understand the man. They never met on common ground. She lived in a world of her own, a made-up, fantasy

world, and she didn't mean to come to grips with anything real . . . not if she could evade it. All this he had found out. At first he had tried to give her what she wanted, but she was too elusive; then he had tried to force her to accept maturity, to appreciate the value of reality. Then his pride revolted; he couldn't go on trying to create something between them that she denied. He had loved her deeply. Finally, seeing through her hysterics, and tired of fighting her, he became bitter. Dorothy went on with her fantasy life, living in a dream, growing more beautiful, more exotic, with a curious secret glow about her. In coming back to London suddenly he'd hoped to find a new Dorothy, brought close to life by the war, someone he could woo again.

He had found her much later that night, dead in the ruins of a building far from their flat.

SITTING here before the fire far away in Connecticut he felt again the sharp bitterness. He had never felt more at an end with things. He wanted to tell Julie something of this. His voice began, low and hard, stumbling out part of the story. What he told was his fear of Sally's following her mother's habit of fantasy, explaining his strictness with the child, his terror of what effect already Dorothy's desire for escape had had, his hatred of deceit. He wanted to say that the sight of Julie and the look in her candid eyes gave him the courage to go on.

"I'm a director of the side shows at the fair," Julie said over the silence when his voice stopped, not wanting to comment on the few remarks he'd made about his wife and child. She was proud of his confidence but embarrassed by it. "The grand opening is in ten more days."

"I'm looking forward to the fair, Julie." He seemed grateful to her for ignoring his unhappiness.

It was good, Julie thought, this change of mood between them. She felt comfortable again, out of the wilderness of suspicion, and a curious sympathy stirred in her for this Englishman with the dark face.

"It'll be a typically American fair, you know. Everything, fortunetellers, barkers, hot dogs."

"And local talent."

"Very local," said Julie. "Right out of the Crosby Foundation."

"Through the benefit of Stewart Crosby?" asked Gault. Julie darted a glance at him, and wished he hadn't brought Stewart's name between them. But there it was.

"Stewart's been marvelous. He's done so much to make things go." She got up to leave and moved toward the door. Gault was watching her rather than listening to her.

"Be sure and come to the fair," she was saying. "Our local talent may surprise you. I've found three stars, an Irish tenor, a Russian knife thrower, a ventriloquist . . . all very American."

She stopped because there didn't seem to be much sense in talking. Her heart's pounding seemed louder. His eyes were fastened on hers, and she couldn't look

away. Her lovely generous mouth parted a little as her breathing quickened.

"Julie, my child," said Tony, "Julie." Just before she slipped out the door he drew a gentle finger down her cheek. He bent and kissed her very softly and then with such urgency that a kind of wildness invaded her and she felt no fear or tension, only a sense of sudden rescue. Then she broke away from him and somehow made her way home.

Chapter Six

LILY stopped in Julie's room before dinner while Julie was brushing her hair.

"I've called Stewart, Julie, and asked him to come and play bridge with us after dinner while John and Tony work. Bea got home this afternoon, so of course I had to ask her too." She was watching Julie keenly in the mirror. Julie felt unaccountably afraid of her suddenly, as if she were a stranger. She shook off the feeling, meeting Lily's eyes in the mirror and leaning forward to paint her mouth. It must be the rising storm and the scene at the stone house and the turmoil in her heart since Tony's kiss. She forced herself to speak lightly.

"That's swell, Lily. I haven't seen Bea for ages."

Lily paused as she left. Her face seemed warm and friendly and she talked as if she and Julie were in a conspiracy together. "I'll take care of Bea. You can concentrate on Stewey," she said. It was just a sisterly remark but Julie again felt the touch of hidden menace. Why did Lily persist in throwing her with Stewart?

Perversely she longed for his presence even though she was irritated at Lily's scheming. She felt he would be something solid to cling to in her suddenly shifting world. His handsome, kind face rose before her and she remembered again their times together before he had tried to make love to her . . . when he was a comfort and strength to lean upon. She rose from the dressing table. The windows rattled with a blast of wind. The storm was mounting but it hadn't broken yet and it epitomized her mood. She was thrilled again as she thought of Tony's kiss, but confused and frightened too. She instinctively believed him rather than Lily in regard to their relationship. "He belongs to me," Lily had said. "Your sister and I are not in love," Tony had told her.

The Crosbys were prompt after dinner and Julie and Lily settled down to bridge with them.

"You and Stewey are partners," Bea said to Julie, taking the lead as usual. "The dear boy and I can think of enough to fight about without cards." Bea lit a cigarette, drew up to the table, sitting very straight and smart, her rather hard face relieved by a humorous mouth. The game began. They were in the middle of a rubber when Tony appeared. Julie's eyes went to him and away quickly. She was hurt that she could read nothing in his face but impatience to get to work. He was odd and difficult and she remembered

that was her first impression. Bea had not met Tony before so the game broke up for a little while in conversation. Gault turned to Bea and Julie heard them talking horses. Bea's clear voice said,

"I'll take a look at your Irish hunters once the war's over but they don't compare with ours."

"Trouble is you breed for pace," he said, "while we breed for disposition."

"Well, we've got you over here now," Bea laughed. "What filly are you selecting?"

"I'm biding my time before becoming involved," Gault joined her laughter. Julie stayed a little away from the bridge table and Stewart moved beside her.

"Julie, I want to talk to you alone if we can. I have some news for you."

"About the fair, Stewart?"

"No, dear, about us. Bea and I had a long talk today."

Julie turned to him, startled. Not here, she wanted to cry out, not now, not yet while I'm all mixed up. How could Bea be so cool and friendly and poised if she knew how Stewart felt about her? A terrible feeling of panic and being trapped assailed her. She was saved from answering Stewart for John arrived to carry Gault off to the morning room and she was called back to the bridge table.

There was a sudden terrible flash of lightning and then the gusts of rain and wind seemed to climb into a crescendo and rush into gale proportions. The noise of the rain was so heavy in the room that it made the slap of the cards sound like whispers.

"I THINK I'll just go up and see if Sally's okay," said Julie, rising before she picked up her hand.

"Oh, my goodness, Julie, you're getting to be a slave to that child," Stewart said. But Julie rose anyhow. Julie heard Lily saying as she went upstairs:

"My dear, Julie is a marvel with that child. Of course I feel Julie is sacrificing herself. . . ." Her voice faded out under the drumming of the rain.

Oh, thought Julie, why do they all fuss so? Sally's my job right now. Yet she, herself, knew that Sally was really her link to Tony Gault.

She went into the child's room, turned on a lamp and saw that the bed was empty. She hurried to the bathroom, calling Sally, and then all over the top story. She ran downstairs and met Sarah coming from the kitchen.

"I went downstairs when I heard the back door banging in the wind and I found it open," Sarah told her.

"Oh!" Julie exclaimed. "That child is out in this. It's the puppy. He must have gotten loose. And Sally's gone to find him."

Julie rushed to the back door and heedlessly ran into the rain. The storm seized her and buffeted her. In a minute she was soaked, her hair a wet tangle on her neck. Close to the kitchen door she found one of Sally's slippers and dashed back to the house for help. Sarah had already called Gault and Latimer from the study and they were ready to start out with flashlights and raincoats. Bea was

efficiently starting the car in front of the house. Lily was stepping as daintily and distastefully as a cat through the downpour to join Bea in the car.

Stewart yelled at Julie as she rushed by him for her trench coat. "Go with the gals by the highroad, in the car. We'll join up with them where the path comes out of the woods." He ran off to follow Gault and Latimer.

Julie rushed out after him. She had a feeling that the puppy would make for its first home, the Crosby stables, and she thought the brook path would be the best place to look. It would be a much shorter route than the highroad. The rain lashed at her. Julie found herself stumbling and slipping breathlessly as she crossed the lawn. She was beaten by the wind and terrified as branches whizzed past her face.

Oh, the poor baby, she thought, out in this. Can she be safe? She saw no signs yet of the men ahead or their flashlights. As she plunged into the copse the trees slacked the wind a little but she was appalled at the damage already done by the storm. The brook was a roaring torrent flooding the banks.

"Sally," she called, and the wind tossed the name back to her. She went along the narrow path, plowing through the mud, calling as she went. Suddenly she saw Gault ahead with his flashlight, climbing up and down the banks of the brook.

"Sally," Julie called. The beam of light lifted and as Julie's gaze swung toward it she caught Gault's eyes in a long, searching look. It seemed in that moment as if he knew what she feared; as if, almost, he joined in her fear.

"Sally," Julie cried again, panic rising in her voice. Lightning forked against the sky, clouds met and roared. Then again there were only the wind and the rain.

Julie stood motionless. Another sound had come in the darkness, a faint yelp. The beam of light flashed to the ground and Julie ran toward the whining cry. The child was stretched under a tree, face downward, with a hand over the puppy.

As Julie took Sally in her arms Gault came running up with his light. It gleamed on the child's wet hair and frightened eyes.

"It's all right now, Sally," Julie told her, trying to wrap her raincoat around the soaked figure in pajamas.

"Let me take her," Gault said. He carried her gently up to the highroad where the car with Bea and Lily was inching along slowly. Bea was calling Sally's name from her open window. Julie yelled that she was found and called for Stewart and Latimer who were still crashing through the underbrush farther down the brook.

"Where to?" Bea said. "She ought to see a doctor right away."

Lily said quickly, "Your house is closer than ours."

Mrs. Crosby was at the door when they arrived. Sarah had telephoned her that Sally was missing in case the child had gone there.

"Take her up to the nursery," Mrs. Crosby said, and Tony started up the

stairs with the still-sobbing child in his arms.

"Stewart," Mrs. Crosby directed, "call Dr. Pollack at once."

A maid came up to make ready the nursery. She turned down the bed, arranged an array of blankets to heat before the open fire she lit in the grate, and brought a tray with whiskey and a bowl of milk to heat on the little electric stove.

Sally began whimpering again. Gault mixed some hot milk and whiskey and brought it to the bed. Dr. Pollack arrived and began an examination.

"Serious?" asked Gault.

"Too soon to tell," Dr. Pollack said, bending over and adjusting his stethoscope, "but I think bed and rest will do the trick."

"Where's Taffy?" Sally suddenly said, struggling to sit up.

"Here, darling, don't worry," Julie answered, bringing the puppy over.

"Give him the milk," Sally said, pushing it away as Tony offered her the glass again.

"You first, old lady," Gault said gently.

Dr. Pollack was writing something on a pad. "Well," he said cheerily, "no bones broken."

JULIE felt her breath go out in a great sigh of relief and she looked up to meet the same relief in Gault's face. "Here," he said handing her some whiskey, "drink this. You look awful."

For a moment the room was still as she drank. It was the pleasantest room in the house, Julie thought . . . warmed by the neat whiskey and relaxed for the first time in hours. It had been Stewart's nursery and remained much as it was when he was the child who'd ridden a hobby horse still standing in the corner. Clustering pink chrysanthemums, a little faded, papered the walls, and the fireplace with the wide grate and its circling fender had a welcoming look about it.

Julie looked at Gault standing by the window. He looked bleak and careworn, she saw, as if all the tension and sudden relief had hit him.

"You look awful, too, Captain Gault," Julie said.

Pollack was saying, "I've left a sedative for the child. Sleep is what she needs. I'll stop by in the morning." He went out with his little black bag and they heard him going downstairs.

"Take those wet things off," Gault told Julie, "and get in the hottest bath you can stand. Stay in it for fifteen minutes at least."

"I'll take care of her," Lily said, suddenly appearing, her hair rearranged from the rain, her make-up perfect. Mrs. Crosby had come in too. Her sharp eyes went from Sally to Gault.

"How's the offspring?" she asked him.

"No bones broken."

She turned to Julie and handed her some clothes she carried. "Put these on, Julie. They're Bea's and they'll fit you."

Julie almost refused to take the clothes. She didn't want to wear Bea Crosby's things but she couldn't say that, so she took them. "You'll have a chill if you don't take off those wet things," Mrs.

Crosby admonished, leaving with Tony.

Julie began taking off her wet clothes in the bathroom while Lily ran her a tub of hot water and poured in bath crystals. She slid down into it thinking she'd like to lie submerged, hidden by steam forever. The day and night weaved through her consciousness, all mixed up. Gault in the little house, then his formality as he came in after dinner, then again their closeness over the child.

Lily's voice roused her. "Sweetie, Mrs. Crosby insists you stay here overnight."

Julie knew perfectly well that Lily had arranged this overnight stay. She was indignant at Lily's interference but too tired to argue. She climbed out of the tub and began to dress.

Before she went downstairs Julie went back into the nursery. Sally was not asleep, and looking down at her Julie thought suddenly, I wish she were mine. I wish she'd live with me and get to trust me completely. We're beginning to be such close friends. I wish—

Gault had come into the room and was speaking to her.

"Thank you so much for looking after Sally," he said.

"That's nothing," Julie smiled at him. She bent to straighten the quilt.

"We're almost ready to go home," Gault said. "How do you feel?"

"I'm staying here overnight," Julie was tired and indifferent and slightly cross. As if she wished everybody, including Tony, would leave her alone.

He looked sharply at her. "Why not come along with us?" he began when Lily again came into the room.

"You look well in Bea's clothes," she said.

"The perfect fit," Julie snapped suddenly, at the end of her patience. "Why don't you all go home?"

"I see no reason for your not coming," Gault broke in stiffly.

"Come along, Tony," Lily said, urging him out of the nursery. "Leave Sally with Julie!"

"SALLY needn't be used as an excuse," Gault said crossly as he and Lily went downstairs.

"Just what do you mean by that?" Lily asked, stopping on the wide landing halfway down and facing him, gazing at him with a dangerous flicker in her eyes.

"It's been perfectly obvious this last month that you want to throw Crosby and Julie together. Aren't you being a little crude?" he went on brutally.

"Tony! You have no right to speak to me like that. Julie happens to be my sister. I'll take care of her without your advice."

"I'm indebted to Julie too for what she did tonight and for saving me from an awkward situation this afternoon. Maybe I want to return the favor," he said to her levelly.

It was a mistake to remind Lily of her frustration of the afternoon. A great surge of futile desire and broken hopes swept her and she lost her temper thoroughly.

"You mind your own business, Tony. And you're not saving Julie from an awkward scene, as you infer. You know

nothing of what's going on. Bea told me tonight coming over in the car that she was willing to give Stewart up if that's what he wants. Stewart is madly in love with Julie. He's told me so. And she's loved him for years. So stop making a fool of yourself, Sir Galahad." His face tightened and went a little white around the mouth. He started to answer when Stewart came out into the hall below.

"Hey, you two, come on down for brandy. Where's Julie?"

"She's coming." Lily's voice now miraculously showed no sign of her rage and all trace of her ferocious temper slid out of her face in one of her lightning changes.

STEWART stayed in the hall and waited for Julie to come down. When she did, he took her hand and drew her to a sofa in the back of the hall.

"Julie, I can't wait. I have to talk to you."

Julie looked at him wearily; first Lily, then Tony, now Stewart. They all wanted something. But Stewart, at least, might be somebody to lean upon. He was always undemanding. But he startled her at once.

"It's all settled," he cried trying to take her in his arms. "Bea's willing to give me my freedom."

Julie drew away. This was what she had once secretly hoped for. But now somehow the ecstasy was lacking.

"Don't pull away from me, darling," Stewart said. "You've got to stand by me."

"I don't want to pull away, Stewart. But you're sure you really want to marry me, that breaking with Bea won't, well, won't wreck your life? Won't complicate everything with your mother?"

"You're trying to get out of it," Stewart said, hurt and puzzled. He stared at her, still holding her shoulders. "You're making excuses. It's not my mother. It's this Gault who's come between us. But I can't go on without you, Julie," he said. "Don't leave me for anyone else."

"It isn't that, Stewart. It's just that I can't decide things all in a rush. Let me go slowly."

Now he was asking her to stand by him and with him. Now their positions were changed; he needed her. Before this she had always needed him. She was beginning to realize fully that she had come into his life, sought his advice, gone to him in grief and with all her problems; from the time of her father's death on, Stewart had filled her life. She had ignored the fact that he was another woman's, that she, Julie, was behaving contrary to the standards by which she'd been reared. Evading reality, she had drifted along and woven a fantasy about Stewart.

Now she was brought up sharp to face the consequences of her action, to face her responsibilities.

"You're infatuated with Gault," Stewart was saying. "Do you think I'm blind?" He went on till she began to cry. Then he took her in his arms, soothing her and apologizing to her for distressing her.

At that moment Gault came back into the hall.

"Commands are always making unexpected entrances, aren't they?" Stewart

said, while Julie turned her head and wiped tears from her cheek.

"Only to the enemy," returned Gault.

Julie stood up and Stewart, angered, rose and put his arms around her. "You're the first to know our good news. Julie and I are to be married," Julie gasped and stiffened in the circle of his arm. She could do nothing right now without creating a horrible scene. All she could do was gaze at Tony and pray he would wait till they could talk. He had been so brilliantly intuitive about her before. . . . "Don't confuse yourself with the fox." Now surely he would know; now when she was trapped by her own folly, he must understand.

"You live indeed in a free country," Tony said with icy precision. He looked from one to the other and turned on his heel. It was awful. Lost now, forever, was the magic that had touched her in the little stone house when Tony had put his hand on her cheek softly, with the most extraordinary gentleness, lifted her face and smiled at her.

"You shouldn't have—" she began. But Stewart broke in angrily.

"I hate this house, I hate my mother." He was like an enraged small boy. "I hate everyone but you, Julie." All the arrogance of a few moments before was gone and his handsome face held bewilderment. Julie had never seen this expression of helplessness on him and she didn't know how to cope with it.

"I love you. Don't you believe that? I need you now," Stewart was saying. "I need you now more than I ever needed you."

Julie closed her eyes, trying to shut out her own confusion. Stewart's voice was going over her and faintly, too, the voices from the drawing room. There was the steady beat of the rain driving against the windows as if it were trying to get in.

She thought, here I am alone with Stewart and it can be for keeps as I've often dreamed it. And she was tired . . . so tired. So much had happened in the last twenty-four hours that time had taken on a different dimension. It didn't seem only a few hours ago that Julie had walked in on Lily and Tony. It seemed ages ago . . . something in the past. Then the storm, the terror for Sally she'd gone through, all that blurred out the events before dinner.

She let Stewart kiss her once and then insisted on going to the living room. Lily was just rising to leave. She turned to Julie with a brilliant and triumphant smile which embraced Stewart too . . . almost a blessing. "We're going along now, Julie," she said, "but we'll come and fetch you in the morning and see if it will be all right to move then. Sleep well."

She and John went out. Julie was left facing Tony. She could read nothing from his expression. Inwardly, where was he? He wouldn't ever explain himself. He never seemed to belong to any surroundings she had seen him in. He seemed to come into them always as a stranger.

"Good night," he said, "and thanks again." He bowed stiffly and went out.

Julie stood watching Mrs. Crosby and her daughter-in-law. The old lady was delighted, Julie knew, at Bea's return. All

my preconceived plans are working out, she seemed to be saying, Bea will bring Stewart to his senses and put an end to his infatuation for Julie. There was an almost haughty look on Mrs. Crosby's face as she sat there before the fire, glasses planted on her high executive nose, her capable fingers busy with knitting. She was rather like a general gloating over the results of a victory. There was to be no sabotage of her son's marriage, her expression proclaimed. No nonsense, no self-indulgence in the pleasure of the moment that would only lead to the disruption of the future. Not if she could help it, not if she could steer the course of her family. She seemed beset with no doubts on that score.

But what you don't know, thought Julie, is that Bea has consented; that is why Bea has come home.

Chapter Seven

IT WAS about a week after the accident of the puppy and the storm. Julie was restless and jumpy. Sally was still at the Crosbys', but Julie felt a strange reluctance to go to see her, much as she wanted to be with the child. She knew what her reluctance meant. She was trying to avoid meetings alone with Stewart. Nothing more had been said since that night. Stewart was affectionate openly, taking for granted her consent to his plans. Bea, poised and her usual cool observant self. Julie was enraged and hurt at Gault's and Lily's attitudes. Tony was avoiding her obviously, making her feel guilty yet giving her no chance to explain, as if she were mixed in some vulgar intrigue. Lily was acting like the cat who ate the canary and treating Julie with the coy indulgence allotted brides and young girls in love.

Tony had gone to Washington for two days, flying down and back. When he was away, not constantly irritating and puzzling Julie with his austere and formal presence, she allowed herself to miss him, to be hurt, to wonder what had changed him from the friend he had become. The enigma of this dark soldier was with her every waking moment. She felt an urge beyond anything to solve it.

The day of the opening night of the fair, she went over to see Sally and take her some more toys.

Mrs. Crosby insisted on her having tea before she went upstairs. She checked over with her all the details of the fair. All the arrangements seemed to please her, but Julie felt the old woman's criticism of her when Stewart came into the room. I'm surrounded by mistrust, she thought, and I've woven a web of emotions I can't get out of. She wanted to yell at Mrs. Crosby, "I don't want your son. I just want to be let alone again." I want to be free of all the strange drags on my heart I don't understand, she went on to herself. Why do I fear Lily? Why can't I simply tell Tony there's been a mistake about Stewart and me? And if there in the stone house their feeling had been simply a trivial kiss, why was she so haunted by a feeling of a great bond; of it not being over; of a growing emotion? She sat

checking over last-minute details, fidgeting a little under Stewart's warm glances and Mrs. Crosby's appraising stare.

"I think I'll go up and see Sally," she said finally.

"Why you have to turn yourself into a nurse for this child—" Stewart complained as she left the room.

Sally was sitting up very straight in bed and being very determined about not taking her medicine.

"You're not being a good girl," Julie scolded her gently.

"No, I'm not," agreed Sally happily.

Julie dropped the subject and began laying out a picture puzzle on the card table by the bed.

The room settled into a kind of brooding quiet.

The child watched her with her bright sparrow-eyes from the nest of pillows.

"It's a gray castle and has pink roses and a moat," she prompted. "You'll see when you've finished."

Under Julie's fingers as she pushed the jigsaw bits about, a terrace began to form.

"There was a castle like that in Scotland," Sally said. "When I used to go through it with Mummie, people always stared at her. My mummie was beautiful."

"Did you climb way up to the top of the castle?" Julie asked, intent upon the cardboard one.

"Father sent us to Scotland," Sally went on, "and Mother didn't want to go. 'Prefer to stay here and be killed?' Father said, just like that. He was mad. And Mother said, 'Simply idiotic,' like that. But Father made us go."

"And then you saw the beautiful castle," said Julie, putting a graceful balustrade in place.

"Mummie didn't stay there long," Sally went on. "She went away and left me." The child's eyes widened and a picture seemed to call to her out of some blur of memory. "I wanted Mummie to take me with her but she left me. Nanny was there but I wanted to go with Mummie. I didn't like being left."

Julie went on arranging the picture puzzle without saying anything. Now she knew what was troubling Sally. Now she understood something of this little girl's inner feelings. All the stories of air raids, all Sally's efforts to attract attention came from her desire to belong to someone.

This, then, was the experience that had disillusioned him and left him embittered. This was the story of the wife whom he had found dead in a London ruin. Something of what he must have gone through, moments of anguish and jealousy, of bitterness and despair, came into Julie's mind.

He looked finished. That had been her thought when she first saw him. That's why he sometimes seemed ruthless, as if nothing mattered except achievement, cold thing to build life on.

"Why doesn't Father come to see me?" Sally asked, suddenly restless. "I wish I weren't here," and she began to cry and slid to the floor. "I don't want to stay in bed any more—"

"Sally," Julie cried, Sally, darting toward the door, knocked over the bedtable and the glass of medicine went

crashing to the floor. It spread rapidly.

"I don't want to stay here," cried Sally, "I want—" but Julie caught her and carried her back to bed.

The door opened and shut and Gault was in the room.

"What's this nonsense?" he demanded. "I want to go out," said Sally.

"Don't be silly," he said, coming toward her, picking up the broken medicine bottle. "You spilled that medicine, didn't you, Sally?"

Julie said nothing but she, too, was watching Gault.

"Know anything about drugs, Sally?" he asked.

"No."

"DRUGS are difficult to get these days," he told her. "So much has to be sent over to the wounded that they're scarce. Often after a great battle there aren't enough drugs to go around."

"You thought I was bad to go after Taffy, didn't you?" Sally said after a moment.

"I thought it brave of you, Sally, to go out for the puppy," he told her, "but the next time you decide to go off on a rescue, get help." He grinned slightly, "Even Commandos don't go alone."

"Oh, Father," said Sally. She didn't put out her arms nor did he attempt to take her in his, but somehow they were holding close to each other.

"Well," said Gault with a squint at Julie, "how about you?"

"I've been working for the fair," said Julie.

Sally had fallen back against the pillows, her eyes drooping, and Julie straightened out the covers.

"Good of you to stay with me," said Gault, "when there are so many more interesting things for you to do."

It didn't sound particularly grateful. It sounded mocking.

"The things that are real always wait," she said.

"Do they, indeed?" Gault smiled.

"Oh, yes."

"You're like Sally," he said. "You go out rescuing people without calling for help."

"I'm not as much of a child as you think."

"You don't know anything," he told her.

"Julie," Stewart called from the hall. "Cocktails." As they went down the stairs, Julie saw Stewart at the foot.

He was looking up in high good humor, smiling, as if gloating over something.

"Latimer just telephoned," said Stewart Crosby. "Rather exciting news."

"Good?" asked Julie.

"He seemed to think so," said Stewart. "You and the Latimers," he told Gault, "have been ordered back to England."

Chapter Eight

A CROWD milled about a platform gay in red, white and blue bunting, where a clown sold chances on war bonds. People began hurrying over from the merry-go-round and the swings, from the other booths and attractions, gazing up at the clown with

his luminous white face and huge, bulbous red nose.

A late warm breeze lingered in the October air as though loath to leave, bringing the false languor of Indian Summer. Julie, trying a great collection of balloons to a tree, looked over the dimmed out grounds now brilliantly lit by moonlight.

Stewart was coming toward her, looking very pleased with the course of events. Lily also had a sense of triumph about her. She was evidently delighted about returning to England. There was a glint of conquest in her eyes. "I've always won," they seemed to be saying. "I've the habit of winning." Gault, too, seemed a little carried away by the thought of departure. At supper at the Crosbys' before they had all come to the fair, Julie had said to him, "You're dying to get back. You're homesick."

"One can wish for things," Tony had answered, laughing at her. She had turned away crossly because he had recognized she was hoping he'd deny her charge and wouldn't give her that satisfaction. Well, thought Julie, when they all came to visit, I was one person. Now they are leaving and I'm very different. This evening was becoming a series of flashes and patterns, little vignettes scenes shifting constantly like a harlequinade. She'd had a little scene alone with Stewart at supper, too. He had confided, with a boyish glee, about his share in the air-raid work.

"I got into it only to be with you, Julie," he told her. "Strategy, don't you see? Watch me win Mother around to our marriage, too." Their marriage was all settled in his mind. They were to begin a life together and he wanted her encouragement, her praise. There was something almost pathetic in it, the idea of Stewart clinging to her. He was still basically Mrs. Crosby's darling boy. There was a kind of charm in that, too. It gave her a sense of being needed which was a comfort in the face of Gault's coldness; a comfort in the face of her feeling of panic at Gault's going to England forever, leaving her without caring. Lily had been right when she said young girls fell for his charm and manner. She was a fool to think she had known more about Gault in the short time they'd known each other than Lily did.

Anyway with Stewart she'd know where she was all the time. He would never awake her to the wild emotion she had felt for Tony perhaps, but he would also never leave her deserted and cold, unable to break through a wall of reserve.

We speak the same language, Stewart and I, Julie told herself again, smiling at him and flipping the great bunch of balloons toward him. We understand each other. This strain I've been feeling lately is just silly panic. Remember how a month ago Stewart was the only person in the world for you? She dared not have it otherwise. Wasn't he to be the solution of all her problems? Weren't Anthony Gault and Lily going away? Why try to alter what is fated?

"You look beautiful, but you will be more beautiful," Stewart pronounced

solemnly; and Julie could tell he was drinking pretty heavily. Oh, well, it's a party, she excused him in her mind. "Like to paint you," he went on, but his eyes kept roving till they rested on Gault standing with Bea. "There's the mighty hero," he said, sounding like a spoilt child when another has picked up one of his toys even though he doesn't want it himself. "There he is being a glamor boy. Well, he'll be yanked back to his own country where he belongs." Julie found it easier to say nothing over the pain that simple sentence gave her. You mustn't want a man who doesn't want you. Take what's at hand.

A dance band had struck up on the green. Some sailors and their girls stepped out.

"I'm sick of all this," said Stewart. "Come on down to the tavern with me, Julie."

"Let's dance," Julie said.

"Fraid to come with me. Is that it? I'm not so tight," he laughed at her. "Or are you afraid to lose sight of your hero? Well, my wife's taken him away from you and Lily so you don't have to worry about that." He was good-natured, but people were beginning to stare at them. Julie looked about for John Latimer. He was always good in a crisis of this kind, but she saw he was waltzing with Lily, whirling her round and round in his sedate English manner.

The fair was all that Julie hoped it would be, if Stewart would only behave. The night itself had a magical quality, spirits in the air and fantasies, a summer's breeze and the hunter's moon riding high in the sky.

"I hate crowds," Stewart was saying, putting his arm around her and laughing. He is incredibly handsome, thought Julie. "Come on down to the tavern, baby."

"Later," John had stopped dancing, and she called to him. "We're putting on a brilliant farewell for you, John."

"Rather." A slight note of depression rang in his voice and Julie moved over to put her arm through his. "It's like a kaleidoscope," Julie said, "a patterned minut. People drift here and there in little eddies, like flotsam in a current. Colors keep making designs. Let's go take a chance," she went on. "I love clowns."

"You're still a child," Stewart said, patting her head. But Julie felt he was getting cross with her.

They passed a refreshment stand crowded with army, navy and their girls. Farewell for them too, Julie thought. The thought of farewell lay deep in her heart tonight. Stewart moved ahead of them and Lily turned from the clown's booth. "Bea's simply agog," she said, watching where Bea and Tony stood a little apart from the crowd.

"She's not the one he's got his eyes on," said Stewart nastily. "She's not the one."

LILY took a sharp whiff of night air through her thin nostrils. Stewey was carrying too many cocktails and highballs. In that condition he always said what he thought.

"It would take a clever person to fool you," smiled Lily.

"You the same." They moved by tacit mutual consent away from John and Julie. Stewart put a hand on Lily's arm, steadying himself. "I'm full of deep thought tonight. I am. Profoundities."

"Really?" said Lily, her foot stirring some autumn leaves.

"Precisely," he went on. "Trouble is my personality is deceiving. I appear blind—I mean bland. But I'm not at all really." He wagged his head. "See things clearly." Lily followed his eyes which rested on his wife and Gault.

"That Gault," exploded Stewart. "He's crazy about Julie."

"What?" Lily's voice was almost a whisper but sharp as a knife.

"He's crazy about Julie," Stewart pronounced slowly.

"You're mad." Lily drew back, as if she'd been struck. "I thought you and Julie had everything fixed up. Don't be a fool, Stewey."

"Not a fool," Stewart protested. "You like him, Lily, and he likes Julie. Tragic."

Lily, always conscious of her surroundings, looked over at her husband and sister.

She saw with a pang Julie's youth—and something else, a kind of loveliness, as she stood there with a necklace of tiny bells about her throat and the breeze stirring her soft yellow dress.

"But he's not going to get her," Stewart was going on. "It's all settled."

"Settled," Lily repeated. The world seemed to change. Settled, she told herself and her glance went from her sister to Gault.

Next week Tony would fly with them back to London. Then all this visit here would be forgotten. A thing of the past, a trivial voyage to one's homeland for a vacation.

"Closer, come closer," the clown was saying rapturously. "Closer, closer."

The crowd surged nearer to the platform, their faces uplifted, eager, wondering, delighting in his silly chatter. Julie and John had strolled over to the bandstand to look down on the gay scene.

"Stewart wants to marry me," she told John Latimer.

"What's that?" Latimer stopped and looked into her face. "Wants to marry you... but, my dear—"

"Bea doesn't care anything about Stewart. They're not happy together."

"Hmm," Latimer murmured. "Stewart wants a home and Bea hates domesticity."

"You see," Julie said as they walked on after a little silence, "Stewart and I speak the same language. We understand each other." It sounded flat.

Where has Gault disappeared to, Julie wondered, glancing about. She couldn't see him anywhere. Oh, well, they were all meeting at Mrs. Crosby's for a late snack. She'd see him then. Soon she realized, pierced by the thought, there would be no chance of seeing him again. No chance of running into him in the village, having him drop in for dinner. The stone house would be empty.

Then Julie saw him. He was with Lily and Bea, standing by a fortune teller. Lily couldn't resist having a gypsy tell

her fortune. She was leaning over, talking to her, her long cape sweeping the ground. "She's marvelous," Lily cried as Julie came along with John. "What do you think, John? I'm taking a trip over water. Come on, Julie, have a turn. You may be starting a great romance." She winked at Julie.

"I'll wait till it comes," said Julie, looking over at Tony. "Aren't you having yours read?"

"I know my fate," he answered coming along to her side. Latimer crossed the gypsy's dirty hand with silver.

"Read her hand," he said, indicating Julie. The gypsy smiled ingratiatingly, picked up Julie's hand and peered at the palm. She shook her head and looked away.

"What is it?"

"A great love comes into your life," the gypsy said after a moment in a toneless voice. "There is a child—"

"Tell me what you really saw," Julie begged. "What was it? Something shocked you?"

The gypsy closed her eyes and opened them.

"Be careful," she told Julie.

Stewart joined them, brushing into the group in a mood of arrogance and geniality.

"I'll tell fortunes," he said. "I'll even tell yours, Madame," and he bowed to the gypsy. "But first I'll let you in on a secret."

He was becoming expansive but Bea Crosby broke in on that.

"Before you become the great clairvoyant, Stewart," she said, "do go over to the Red Cross unit. Mrs. Matthews is screaming for you."

"What's that? Am I needed everywhere?" Stewart demanded crossly, but he was obviously a little delighted with himself.

"What she wants to know—" Bea said taking his arm.

"Have to attend to everything," he complained grandly, and went with her.

Lily watched them sauntering toward the Red Cross exhibit and turning to Gault touched his arm.

"The dear Stewart—" she said. "Too bad Bea broke up his fortunetelling act."

"Clever woman," said Gault.

At the Red Cross unit Stewart was still with Bea. Well, soon Julie would take her place, thought Lily, turning to Tony.

"You know what Stewart was going to tell, don't you?" She smiled, finding it hard to keep the triumph from her voice. "He was going to announce his engagement to Julie."

"He was pretty tight," Tony answered distastefully.

He frowned as he watched Stewart go over toward Julie at the fortuneteller's tent. His voice carried over the general chatter, attracting a good deal of attention.

"I've arranged everything," he was saying. "Red Cross unit. Air-warden's. All under control." He swayed toward Julie a little. "Always have to come to me. Always..."

"Grand," said Julie trying to get him away from the crowd.

"Come on, Julie," Stewart kept urging.

"I'm bored with all this. Want to go to the tavern..."

"Let's go to your house. You can get a drink there and some food..."

"Not my house. My mother's house. No. Tonight the tavern's my home."

Well, why not go to the tavern with him? There would be nights and nights in the future when she'd go there.

Stewart was feeling injured at her reluctance. "Trouble with you is, you don't understand me. Trouble is—"

As his voice went on and on Julie stood there feeling embarrassed and helpless. A little crowd had collected and she didn't know how to control him. She felt gauche and awkward. Her one desire was that of flight. It was Bea Crosby who put an end to his speech.

"Look here, Stewey, I'm in a fix," she said, suddenly appearing at his elbow.

"You, my most efficient lady? Incredible." He bowed from the waist.

"Everyone's coming back to the house and there isn't going to be enough whiskey," she told him. "Can't you come down to the tavern with me, Stewey? They'll never give me the stuff but you can get anything."

Even the onlookers could tell what was involved here. A wife was taking back her husband, exercising her rights over her property in the face of the helplessness of her rival. Stewart too seemed conscious of something, that some vague security surrounded him. He put his hand on Bea's arm.

"Of course, I will, dear," he said.

Julie Edgerton moved away and let Stewart depart with his wife.

Chapter Nine

SHE didn't really care about Stewart's leaving her, about being humiliated by the Crosbys. She understood Bea's taking over her husband in the face of her own lack of ability to deal with him. She slipped easily back into the feeling that Stewart was just a family friend, nothing special to her. She saw him, too, honestly for the first time as a man full of charm, easygoing and weak, utterly spoiled by his mother and wife.

"It really doesn't matter, you know," Gault said, coming up to her suddenly.

"How do you know?" Her voice shook and broke. Why did he come bothering her? Wasn't life difficult enough without making it heartbreaking? He would be gone soon enough.

"I'll tell you how I know," he said smiling down at her. "I know because you and I have a bond. We need each other, Julie. Don't you feel that? All our lives we'll seek each other out because there's love between us."

"Oh, no," she said, trying to put him away, suddenly shy and awkward. "No, that's not true... I'm in love..."

"Oh, yes." He mocked her gently, and she was in Tony's arms, held as if he would never let her go, his lips hard on hers. Lily's voice suddenly reached them, coming through space like a shot.

"Julie," she called. "Julie, they want you over here."

Lily had seen it all happen. She had watched Gault when he saw Julie in the deep shadow under the tree, had seen him go to her as if by a pre-arranged sign. She knew there had been no signal, knew that what she saw was the culmination of what she had seen in Tony Gault's eyes when he looked at her sister the first night of their arrival.

The clown was examining a slip of paper under a lantern. "The first prize, a hundred-dollar war bond goes to—" he paused and smiled around tantalizingly at all the uplifted faces below him—"It goes to—Mrs. John Latimer."

"I'm lucky," said Lily, putting a cigarette between her lips.

"A war bond," said Julie, not knowing what she was saying.

Lily had drawn closer to her sister and, bending over to strike a match, shielding the flame with her great cape, tried to light her cigarette. But the lighted match fell into the folds of Julie's soft dress.

"Oh," Julie cried out. Then there was a cry of horror from the crowd as flame spurted in the soft chiffon.

Flame was climbing her side. Julie thrust out a hand to keep anyone from coming close to her. The clown had jumped from the platform and the people began clutching at Julie or pushing to get away. In the flash of a second Gault had turned to Lily. He seemed to become suddenly enormously tall and awesome. His hands tore the cape from her body, ripped it from its fastening and turning, he caught Julie, wrapped her in it and threw her on the ground.

The crowd stood back while Gault knelt beside Lily and beat out the flames with his hands.

The air-raid wardens came running with their equipment. As they lifted her gently onto a stretcher, Julie turned her head away, sobbing like a child that doesn't want to cry.

LILY LATIMER glanced at her husband as they drove back to the house, but she was wise enough not to speak. It wasn't till they came to the driveway that Latimer spoke in his customary quiet undertone. What he said made her catch her breath.

"I know you are infatuated with Gault," Latimer said, "and I've known from the first you didn't have a chance."

It was terrible, Lily was thinking, to have to sit there and listen to the truth.

"You're nearly forty," her husband was saying. "You can no longer compete with youth. You've had a good home with me but I'm growing old and that doesn't suit you. But you must remember, my dear, so are you."

They had come to the house and Lily got out of the car and waited, without a word, at the front door for Latimer.

The house lay in darkness and in darkness Lily and John made their way up the stairs.

"I pity you," he went on. "You've lived during the period of dreadful war, Lily. You've walked through the streets of London where death and destruction were daily occurrences. You've become used to violence." And he paused in the

black-out hall and sought his wife's face in the darkness.

"That's why I pity you," he said. "You've been caught by violence. You're an unprincipled and greedy woman."

"John," cried Lily. Suddenly she was crying.

She stood there without speaking, staring ahead through the darkness, unmindful of the tears that streaked a path through her make-up.

She saw with a piercing realization that up to now she had falsified every important experience in her life if the need to do so furthered her purpose. A kind of horror of herself touched her and she tasted the most bitter flavor of life, a defeat of her own making.

"I'm still in love with you," John was saying dispassionately. "There's something about you, Lily, a kind of recklessness that has a fascination for me."

"I'm willing to give you a second chance, Lily, but there are clauses in this contract. Come back as my wife; run my house; do your job. Those are my terms."

Lily felt hope stir in her . . . terms . . . those were easy, those were safety. She had to face the truth of John's accusation but he was willing to give her a chance. She could make the grade. Oh, yes, she surely could. Her heart surged with new hope and she turned to her husband.

Suddenly she was clinging to him. "I didn't mean to do it. Honestly, John. I didn't mean to do it."

John held her against him but his calm voice went on like an accusing judge's.

"Whether you meant to or not, Lily, you'll never know. That's a dreadful punishment—never really to know yourself what you meant. You are also going to be terribly punished by not being able to see Julie and explain. I will not have that child put through any more than she has been this month by you and Gault and that Crosby fool."

"But, John, don't be so hard. I must see her. She must understand it was an accident." Lily's mouth was distorted and trembling.

"Lily, be realistic. I doubt if Julie will

want to see you immediately. You can write her from England. Now stop dramatizing yourself and your emotions."

It sounded soothing to Lily; no more fighting or competing . . . just shelve the whole business onto John's shoulders and follow a routine. She was swept with gratitude for this man who could see her delusions, scold her justly and offer her an escape from the horror of living alone with her memories. Terrible memories. Lily recognized perfectly clearly that this was her last chance for grace. She also knew that she would often be bored, often desperate, but with John helping her and believing in her she might make a life worthy of his trust.

THERE was a brooding peace in the living room of the little stone house. Julie lay on the sofa covered with a rug, her arms swathed in gauze bandages. She slept lightly. Gault sat in an armchair by the fire, watching her. He and Mrs. Crosby had had her brought down here after she had been treated in the first-aid tent. Mrs. Crosby had just left. She had been marvellously efficient about having Julie looked after and, once the first-aid treatment was completed, had whisked her away in her car.

"She'll be all right, Captain," she said, covering Julie. "When the dope wears off and she wakes, be sure you're with her so she won't be frightened. I'll be back in about an hour to stay with her tonight."

"This is a dreadful thing to have happened but Julie's got guts enough to take it." She had looked as if she wanted to say more to him but stopped herself and went off to her own house.

Tony watched Julie as she slept and thought, at last, here it is. This is what it's all been leading to. The feeling of peace in the little room seemed to symbolize the end of his restless searching for all time. Here was where he would stop. It wasn't too much to hope . . . it couldn't be . . . that Julie would be ready to share his life with him. The fire hissed a little and the clock ticked on as he sat there

waiting, oddly patient, for her to waken. His world was at peace.

Julie fought consciousness. She felt as if she were rising to the surface of a great bubble. She didn't want to waken. There was an unknown horror she would have to face.

But she couldn't fight to hold on to sleep any longer and she opened her eyes. She saw Tony leap to his feet from his place by the fire and came toward her. He knelt beside the sofa. His expression was one of anxious, tender concern. His eyes were no longer keen and diagnostic; they held only gentleness.

"You're all right now, Julie. You're with me. You'll be okay tomorrow. They gave you some dope while they were bandaging you. Julie, it's not a bad accident. Don't think about it."

"I won't," she said and at the expression of tenderness that crossed his face she suddenly began to cry weakly like a child. "I just don't see why she did it."

He took her in his arms and held her against his shoulder, soothing her, helping her with his tenderness.

"Don't think about it, darling. It was an accident."

"We'll talk about it all later."

When he said "later" she remembered again with a horrible sense of loss that he would be leaving.

"Later? You'll be gone." She sounded so desolate he looked down at her and laughed.

"I'm not leaving, Julie. Why did you think I flew down to Washington? I'm to be left behind. There was unfinished business to do . . . I had my plans all made to rescue you from Stewart." One of his eyebrows raised in the sardonic expression she knew as characteristic of him when he was hiding emotion. He caught his breath sharply. "I'm afraid I'll have to be rescuing you from myself."

"Tony." His arms went around her and he sank his head onto her shoulder.

"Don't ever leave me, Julie," said Tony Gault.

THE END

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I Live With His Family

WHEN my husband received the now-famous letter from Uncle Sam, beginning "Greetings"—I had to resign myself to his induction in the Army. We knew his new mode of living would be taken care of by rules and regulations. But how about mine?

After many long talks and sleepless nights, we decided that I was to move in with his family. Once that was settled, I felt better. Oh, I did shed a few sentimental tears when I packed the furniture for storage, but I knew I was doing a sensible thing. I kissed Steve good-by, he went off to the wars, and I was on my own!

My first step was to forget everything I had read or seen in the movies about living with in-laws. "It ain't necessarily so," I decided. I liked Steve's parents so much that there was no reason why I couldn't get along smoothly with them.

One evening, just before I moved in, my mother-in-law and I sat down to work out the details of our new life together. We agreed that some difficult situations might come up, but that if we faced them honestly, my living with them would be a happy arrangement for all of us.

We did just that. Some things worked out beautifully, others did not. A few small annoyances came up that I had to work out for myself.

One of the first things we discussed, was money. Since Mrs. Davis would accept no financial contribution from me, I made a mental note to be very careful not to abuse her hospitality. I am as considerate of electric lights, linens and phone calls, as if I were paying the bills.

Probably because I don't contribute to the living expenses, my in-laws expect me to save a great deal. I do put the major part of my salary into war bonds, yet now and then I think I am extravagant. Steve's mother lifts an eyebrow when she sees me bringing home packages from the stores. I brought her around on a guess by taking her into my confidence. I tried saying, "I feel so blue, maybe a new bright print would help," and it worked. She was all sympathy at once. When I explained a new suit by saying, "I do want to look nice when Steve gets home on furlough," she agreed with me. And after all, it is my own hard-earned money I'm spending.

Mrs. Davis took it for granted, that night we made plans, that I would eat at home every evening. I explained at once that I very often stay downtown for volunteer work, or go to a movie with a friend. The truth is, Mrs. Davis has never forgotten her old-world Russian recipes and she serves a different type of meal from what I've been used to. I haven't managed to adapt my tastes completely. Consequently, I plan to eat out with my friends fairly often. For the other nights—well, I devote them to learning to like Russian cooking. Sometimes I offer to take a turn in the kitchen myself.

One thing I had never anticipated was that Mrs. Davis would like to borrow and use my personal things. I was the only girl in a family of boys, and I had never had to share my things before. At first I found myself a little disconcerted when my mother-in-law, as a matter of course, borrowed cosmetics, jewelry and so on. After awhile, though, I realized that, while she may be eager

to wear my amber earrings, she's just as willing to lend me stockings when I get a run in my last pair. These little exchanges make for friendship between us.

There were other little privacies my in-laws violated. In their family everything has always been community news. They are curious about who was on the telephone, or who wrote to me on that lovely gray stationery. So I tell them. They even ask why Elizabeth doesn't come over any more—did I quarrel with her? I grin and take it, because I realize that they are genuinely interested in their son's wife, and I can't resent their probing.

However, when I invited my girl friends over for a nice intimate gab-fest, and found that my mother-in-law expected to sit in on the gathering, I had to find some tactful way to entertain on my own. The next time I expected some friends, I told her that Ella Lou wanted to tell the girls about her new romance. Naturally, not knowing Mrs. Davis very well, she might not feel so free to talk about it. My mother-in-law gladly made other plans for that night.

I admit that it's hard not to abuse the privileges my in-laws extend to me. I have to remind myself that they cannot be shut out of their own living room too frequently to make room for my friends. I therefore entertain much less than I did in my own home, and my friends understand.

When my in-laws invite older people, with whom I have little in common, I stay around long enough to be introduced and chat for a little while, and then continue with my own plans.

All the members of the household have different tastes in radio programs, so I used to rinse my undies or shower while the Davises listened to their favorite comedian. Then when that program was over, I'd ask to listen to Bob Hope, whose humor I cannot live without. Later on, I did manage to get a portable radio for my own room.

I found I had to be especially careful about my recreation away from home. Steve's family didn't always see eye to eye with me on that. I tried to make them understand that I love them very much but I love my friends too. And since Steve is away, I have all the more reason for wanting to keep up with our friends.

They merely asked me to think twice before I accept any invitations to go out. "It is not so easy for a married woman separated from her husband to keep from being talked about," Mrs. Davis said.

So I go out fairly often, but I don't think I leave any room for criticism. When I attend a party, I make it a point to get home at a decent hour. Neighbors notice those things and I don't want to embarrass my in-laws. Movies, bowling, skating—they are all fun. I simply act like the lady I know I am. I'm not going to give anyone cause for gossip that will haunt my marriage later on.

All in all, the arrangement of living with my in-laws is very satisfactory. When the going gets hard, I remember that they are being inconvenienced too.

As for Steve, I guess the pup tent he lives in is no bridal suite either. I know when the battle's won, we two will be together again in our own home and in-laws will be people who come over for dinner on Sundays.

BY FRIEDA E. DAVIS

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